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NATIONAL IDENTITY
AND
RECENT CANADIAN FICTION
(1965-1973)

by

© DEANE ERNEST DAVID DOWNEY

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
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The undersigned certify they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled NATIONAL IDENTITY AND RECENT CANADIAN FICTION (1965-1973) submitted by Deane Ernest David Downey in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

The most fundamental quality of the Canadian imagination must be its eclecticism. This conclusion is the product of my study of approximately eighty-five works of Canadian fiction published between 1965 and 1973, in which I attempted to ascertain the effect of the Canadian milieu on the artistic vision - the evidence, in short, of a Canadian identity in these works. I have become convinced that because of the particular characteristics of this country, much less the nature of the concept of national identity itself, the search for a central strain or theme or quality in our literature is bound to be frustrated by inadequacy.

The Canadian identity, then, is to be discovered in our tolerance of diversity. Part I of this study contains four chapters that demonstrate why the search for monolithicity as regards the Canadian identity is based on inadequate acknowledgement of some of the most important facts about our history, geography, and social structure. Chapter I examines certain obstacles to the formulation of a unified national awareness in Canada. Chapter II explains how the nature and scope of this study were established, and describes some of my underlying presuppositions. Chapter III demonstrates the inadequacies of a rather prominent tendency in our literature to portray a representative

national character - a tendency that ignores the central quality of diversity in our national identity. Chapter IV examines the most recent novel by Hugh MacLennan, a respected analyst through fiction of some of the central issues in our national experience, and reveals a rather uncharacteristic fragmentation of the artistic vision in that novel that seems to signify a new direction in his assessment of the Canadian situation.

The balance of this study is devoted to a consideration of nine strands in the skein of the Canadian identity as they have been portrayed in recent fiction. Part II consists of three chapters that undermine the myth of Canada as the peaceable kingdom by their examination of how Canadian writers perceive the apparent impasse in relations between French and English Canadians, the plight of Canada's native peoples, and the experiences of new immigrants in this country. Here, identity is conveyed as a consequence of conflict.

The three chapters of Part III reveal a tendency for Canadian writers to convey aspects of the Canadian identity through retrospection. Chapter VIII examines a trilogy of novels by Robert Kroetsch about the Western Canadian past. In Chapter IX fictional reminiscences about life in the small Canadian town are discussed. Chapter X reveals the tendency for many Canadians to long to leave this country, and yet once leaving to recreate through memory some of the key elements of the Canadian experience.

Part IV demonstrates how some aspects of the diverse Canadian identity are to be found in terms of Canada's relationships with other countries. The paradoxical nature of our relations with Great Britain and the United States is examined in Chapters XI and XII. Chapter XIII shows how recent interest in African nationalism illuminates further elements of the Canadian identity.

My central contention in this study, therefore, is that it is from the potpourri of these Canadian issues and experiences that the diverse aspects of the Canadian identity are to be perceived.

Acknowledgements

A study such as this is the product of many influences, some of which I am just now recognizing. I became interested in the novels of Hugh MacLennan as a result of taking an undergraduate course from him at McGill some fourteen years ago. He referred to his fiction only on rare occasions, and then always obliquely, but because of my appreciation of his teaching ability I was drawn to read some of his work, and my interest in both the novel and the Canadian identity was formed.

A few years later I embarked on an M.A. in English program at the University of Toronto, where I had the privilege of taking courses from Malcolm Ross, M. T. Wilson, and Gordon Roper, among others, all of whom have written about the Canadian identity as illuminated by creative literature. Only Dr. Roper's course concentrated on the field of Canadian literature, but as I became aware of the contributions of the other two professors to this area of study, my interest in that field of specialization grew. I am grateful for the inspiration these gifted scholars have provided in the pursuit of the present topic.

My professors at the University of Alberta have been no less helpful. In addition to the members of my thesis committee, I am grateful to Professor R. T. Harrison for his course in Canadian prairie fiction, and also to Professor

Sandra Djwa for her contributions during the second half of the same course - a consideration of recent Canadian fiction. The courses taught by Professor Roberecht of the Romance Languages department and Professor McCaughey of the English department in the Realistic Tradition in Fiction and Literary Criticism respectively provided fundamental background for the present study.

I wish to acknowledge with gratitude several forms of financial aid: a two-year teaching assistantship from the Department of English, a graduate fellowship from the Province of Alberta, and a dissertation fellowship from the University of Alberta.

To the Computing Services Division at the University of Alberta goes my sincere appreciation for their financial assistance and technical advice in enabling me to produce this thesis on the I.B.M. 360/67 computer. Special praise goes to consultants Ric, Grant and Bruce, and to Vic Yanda, Supervisor of Information Services, who was responsible for introducing me to the prospect of formatting my thesis by computer, and later arranging for financial assistance.

My wife Margaret has provided another kind of inspiration. Her loving patience and support has played no small part in enabling me to see this project through to its completion.

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PART I - ACKNOWLEDGING THE IMPEDIMENTS

I. Obstacles to the Formulation of Canada's National Identity

> Has Canada got an identity - this everlasting, frustrating, humiliating question! It is like asking a person to state his reasons for being alive, the assumption being that if he cannot explain _why_ he is alive, he must be presumed dead.[1]

This remark by Hugh MacLennan, that prominent analyst of Canada's national identity, aptly characterizes the root dilemma of writers recent and remote, fictional and otherwise, who have attempted to ascertain the unique nature of the Canadian experience. They are tempted to express profound impatience with those detractors who fail to see that existence implies essence - that in spite of external pressure and internal irresolution Canada remains in a surprisingly robust state of health. And yet the same defenders of the national faith are frequently perplexed by the immense difficulty encountered in describing with any degree of consensus the precise qualities of that national entity.

In my view one of the main reasons for the difficulties encountered in reaching any meaningful consensus as to the nature of the Canadian identity lies in an inadequate understanding of the ambiguities inherent in the concept of national identity itself. National identity is more easily sensed than defined. It is formulated largely by means of intuition rather than conscious reasoning. It is highly subjective, yet at the same time it induces a community of outlooks and values that comes to be shared by a vast number of people. It is usually in a process of constant refinement, yet it seems to contain a core of qualities or attitudes that prove surprisingly resistant to renovation.

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[1] Hugh MacLennan, "Canadian National Identity," in George F. G. Stanley, ed., _Canadian Identity: A Syposium_ (Sackville, N.B., 1969), p. 23.

The complexity of the concept of national identity is further illuminated when the inadequacy of the definition of identity is considered. G. F. Stout defines "identity" as "Recognition of a thing as different from all other things, and including in its unity all its inner changes and other diversities. Such a thing is said to remain the same or to have sameness."[2] Now such a definition may be adequate in describing the identity of a person or an object, but it reveals serious limitations when applied to as diverse an entity as a nation. First of all, a nation's identity cannot possibly differ in every respect from all other nations. Many of the United States' attitudes towards individual liberty, for example, are shared by many other nations in the world. In addition, many elements of a nation's community of values may arise from the Judeo-Christian tradition or from global historical experiences, sources of national opinion which a nation shares with other nations. Thus national identity is derived from more than the differences which make a nation unique from all other nations. Otherwise the elements in a nation's identity would be based on slim pickings indeed.

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[2] G. F. Stout, "Identity," in J. M. Baldwin, ed., Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology, I (New York, 1901), 504.

However, it is significant that Stout's definition of identity does permit changes to take place and diversities to be present in the entity without threatening the perpetuation of its identity. When that entity is a nation, the ability to accommodate such diversities and changes would seem to be an integral component of the nation's identity. This view was confirmed in a 1960 trend report to the International Union of Scientific Psychology on studies of national character, in which the authors asserted that the differences within a country were even more important than the similarities:

> The complex organism of the modern state seems to offer numberless opportunities for the rise of dissimilarities among its inhabitants, and very few, if any, crucibles from which nationwide similarities might emerge. And are not the obvious diversities more important anyway than the obscure conformities?[3]

In addition to these difficulties of definition, anyone attempting to draw conclusions about Canada's national identity has to be aware of several particularly Canadian impediments to an awareness of nationally shared attitudes and norms that would normally lead to a sense of national identity. First of all, very strong feelings of regional identity in Canada compete vigorously with the creation and maintenance of a national awareness. The most obvious reason for this factor is the vastness of the country; it is decidedly difficult for the mind to grasp Canada as an entire entity. Kildare Dobbs remarks on how this vastness inhibits the development of allegiance to the nation as a whole:

---

[3] H. C. J. Duijker and N. H. Frijda, National Character and National Stereotypes (Amsterdam, 1960), p. 6.

> The truth is that the thought "Canada" is impossible to think all at once. Love of country is difficult when, like Aristotle's "creature of vast size," its unity and wholeness are lost to imagination. And so the patriotism of Canadians tends to be - in a perfectly respectable and human sense - provincial, and even parochial.*

Paradoxically, this same overwhelming vastness does arouse similar reactions in Canadians no matter where they happen to reside, but the response is to the immediate physical magnitude of the land, not to its political manifestation as a nation.

The great variety of terrain and climate in Canada is another factor contributing to a greater preoccupation with regional rather than national interests. As a result, it is very difficult for the prairie farmer, for example, to identify with the outlook of the Newfoundland fisherman, or for the Toronto suburbanite to comprehend the value system of a B.C. miner. Although Canada is customarily divided into five geographical regions - B.C., the prairie provinces, Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritimes - even superficial investigation reveals conflicting interests that determine loyalties on a more restricted regional level still.

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* Kildare Dobbs, "Canada's Regions," in Alan Dawe, ed., Profile of a Nation (Toronto, 1969), p. 64.

Another obstacle impeding the formation of a Canadian identity is our comparatively unperturbed history. The United States, for example, was launched into existence as a nation by terminating by revolutionary means her ties of obligation to Britain, but Canada evolved into national existence by insisting upon retaining those ties. R. W. B. Lewis has shown that one of the chief traits of nineteenth century American scholarship was insistence that the ties with Europe had to be severed, and that a new kind of nation had to be formed.[5] Canada has not made any such insistence, at least not until the last decade or so.

Furthermore, countries like the U.S.A. can look back to events such as the American Civil War or the conflict against the Japanese in World War II as crises which helped to arouse patriotic fervour, for America's very continued existence as a national entity was threatened. Conversely, the focus of Canada's concern in her involvement in both world wars has been the threat to the continuing existence of Britain much more than the threat to her own existence. Thus the reinforcement of national identity that normally ensues whenever national existence is threatened did not materialize. While the success of Canadian efforts in these two conflicts did give rise to temporary feelings of national pride, there has been great difficulty in transferring this pride to a more permanent sense of national identity, due probably to the lack of a particularly unique factor in these contributions more than anything else. Probably the defeat of the American attempt to invade Canada in 1812 had the greatest potential of any event in our history for arousing feelings of national pride and sense of identity, but the Canadian propensity to underrate our national accomplishments has resulted in most Canadians, if they even know about this event in our history, ascribing the victory more to luck - and American bungling - than good Canadian management.

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[5] See The American Adam. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955.

I have already touched by implication on the third obstacle to the formulation of a coherent Canadian identity - the somewhat overwhelming proximity of the United States, and the profound influence it brings to bear on Canada's economic and cultural life. Vincent Massey aptly observed on one occasion that our history pulls Canada towards

Britain, but our geography pulls us towards the U.S.A. Paradoxically, Canadian nationalists have always found that the threat of American domination can act very much as a catalyst to Canadian patriotism, not a damper. But what I have in mind here is the more subtle ways in which the very presence of the U.S.A. reduces the sense of difference that would otherwise contribute to a greater sense of Canadian identity. In a book published during our centennial year this situation was described as follows:

> When some fifteen million people speak American, watch American TV, read American magazines, follow American fashions in everything from high style to low life, what, if anything, distinguishes them from Americans? The conventional wisdom . . . was that Canada had a distinctive national character perceptible to the most myopic observer, but the distinction was embarrassingly difficult to describe, let alone define.[6]

The final obstacle which impedes attempts to ascertain the nature of the Canadian identity is the persistence and strength of ethnic loyalties in this country. It has become traditional to view Canadian society as a mosaic, in which the retention of distinctive ethnic qualities and allegiances is considered to enrich the nation as a whole, while in America it is assumed that people try to lose their ethnic identity in order to be absorbed into the great American melting pot with the greatest possible dispatch. Although Professor John Porter has done much to challenge the view that retention of such ethnic particularities in Canada is advantageous,[7] he does confirm that ethnic identities in this country tend to be retained, occasionally to the detriment of the individual involved unless he happens to be British or American by birth. The best example of the retention of such loyalties is to be observed of course in the French-speaking people of Canada, whose lingual, legal, and religious rights were guaranteed by legislative instrument as early as the Quebec Act of 1774, shortly after their military defeat by the British, as well as in the very structure of the BNA Act. But it is also true that smaller but no less racially-conscious ethnic groups have been encouraged by Canada's climate of relative tolerance to retain their ethnic identities. The effect of this on the formation of national identity is described by Porter:

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[6] Blair Fraser, The Search for Identity (Garden City, N.Y., 1967), p. 3.

> If not its one distinctive value, that of the mosaic is Canada's most cherished. . . . It seems inescapable that the strong emphasis on ethnic differentiation can result only in those continuing dual loyalties which prevent the emergence of any clear Canadian identity.[8]

Lorne Pierce had made a similar remark five years earlier:

> We hear a good deal about a sense of identity, but in a country so young, and with many and dissimilar ethnic

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[7] See The Vertical Mosaic, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965.

[8] Ibid., p. 558.

> groups, it must be obvious that our identity, for the moment, should of necessity be somewhat vague.[9]

The result of all these conflicting loyalties and pressures is that Canadians are usually pulled not merely in two but in several directions when any attempt is made to arouse something resembling national sentiment. Blair Fraser summarizes this situation rather nicely:

> Tensions in Canada are never merely two-way. Nothing so simple as north against south, English against Irish, French against German. In Canada the patterns of hostility are a kaleidoscope of regional and religious, personal and political, social and economic, cultural and linguistic prejudice in which no combination is reliably predictable.[10]

There have been varied responses on the part of interpreters of the Canadian identity both fictional and otherwise to these several theoretical and socio-cultural obstacles to the articulation of our national identity. Not surprisingly, there are many investigators who either explicitly or by inference disparage all attempts to formulate a reasonably monolithic image of Canada's national identity as either visionary or presumptuous. For example, Dr. Norman MacKenzie, President of the University of British Columbia at the time, asserted over a decade ago:

> . . . I am by no means convinced that the average Canadian today is really interested in the development and perpetuation of Canada as a separate nation, or is

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[9] Lorne Pierce, A Canadian Nation (Toronto, 1960), p. 3.

[10] Fraser, p. 248.

> willing to pay the price that may be, and almost certainly will be, necessary to guarantee this.
>
> This attitude, if I interpret it correctly, comes, I suggest, out of the query as to whether in the kind of world that is taking shape before us, this business of Canadian nationalism is really important and worthwhile. . . .[11]

Lionel Rubinoff, in an article discussing such analysts of Canada's national essence, after asserting triumphantly that we in Canada are not driven by the neurotic need to define our identity, indicates his opinion of those who do make such attempts in terms rather stronger than those of Dr. MacKenzie:

> Granted, there are some Canadian intellectuals who take the search for a Canadian destiny more seriously, and who indulge in an eschatological brand of the philosophy of history. Such intellectuals, however, betray once again the enormous influence of European and American culture on the Canadian consciousness, an influence which in my opinion we ought to be far more critical of than we apparently are.[12]

Fiction writers also occasionally convey such views. The narrator's imaginary castigation of his dead friend F. in Leonard Cohen's Beautiful Losers is representative: "You've turned Canada into a vast analyst's couch from which we dream and redream nightmares of identity, and all your solutions are as dull as psychiatry."[13]

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[11] Quoted in Pierce, p. 38.

[12] Lionel Rubinoff, "National Purpose and Ideology," Notes for a Native Land, ed. Andy Wainwright (Toronto, 1969), p. 47.

[13] Leonard Cohen, Beautiful Losers (Toronto,1966), p. 133.

Another well-known Canadian novelist, Margaret Laurence, intimated on one occasion that a conscious effort to make her art "Canadian" would be inhibiting: "A strange aspect of my so-called Canadian writing is that I haven't been much aware of its being Canadian, and this seems a good thing to me. . . ."[14] This by no means implies that she doesn't wish her art to portray particular Canadian experiences. Indeed, her evocation of small-town Manitoba atmosphere and values is well-known for its effectiveness and insight. But her remark does provide another example of this tendency to view the deliberate artistic evocation of anything distinctively Canadian as somehow unworthy and inhibiting.

Other writers, aware of the difficulties involved in an investigation of Canada's national identity, have cautiously intimated that such an identity is existent and distinguishable from other national identities without specifying very precisely what those distinguishing traits are. Robertson Davies exhibited this tendency when answering one of his own rhetorical questions:

> What are the problems that might give rise to valid Canadian literature? Certainly our differences from the rest of the world, from France, from England and from the USA. These differences do not have to be manufactured, nor should they be blown up out of

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[14] "Ten Years' Sentences," Canadian Literature, No. 41 (Summer,1969), p. 15.

> proportion, for they are subtle; but what is subtle in Canada tends to be minimized.[15]

This lack of certainty has moved some writers to see Canadians as people of the divided vision, or perhaps more appropriately, as afflicted with multiple vision. W. L. Morton describes Canada as ". . . a country resting on paradoxes and anomalies, governed only by compromise and kept strong only by moderation."[16] Most attempts to explain these paradoxes merely amplify differences; rarely are those anomalies illuminated.

These several obstacles to a confident formulation of our national identity have produced several unfortunate consequences. One of the most regrettable is an inordinate fear on the part of many of our creative writers of exhibiting too many exclusively regional features in their work. However, anyone familiar with the writings of Jane Austen, Thomas Hardy, Arnold Bennett, or William Faulkner, to name just a few novelists known for their strong evocation of region, is aware that the examination of universal human issues in their novels depends upon the vivid portrayal of a particular geographic locale's habits, speech, manners, folklore, and beliefs. Hugh MacLennan, commenting on the existence of strong regional identities in Canada, emphasizes the importance of preserving such distinctive characteristics:

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[15] Robertson Davies, "The Poetry of a People," in Wainwright, p. 97.

[16] _The Canadian Identity_ (Toronto, 1972), p. 51.

> . . . these regional nationhoods are the basis, indeed contain the entire meaning, of that larger abstraction called Canadian national identity. Here we differ absolutely from the United States whose founding fathers and their successors, obsessed with the old Judaic notion of ONE GOD, endeavoured through their educational system to make the country a melting pot. It would be better to say that they homogenized their people.[17]

Another negative effect of the obstacles to the clear formulation of Canada's national identity is the propensity of some writers to oversimplify that identity by portraying some of the influences on Canada as polarities of which Canada is the mean. Northrop Frye identified the most frequent example of this tendency: the assessment of the influences of Britain and the U.S.A. on Canada:

> The simultaneous influence of two larger nations speaking the same language has been practically beneficial to English Canada, but theoretically confusing. It is often suggested that Canada's identity is to be found in some via media, or via mediocris, between the other two. This has the disadvantage that the British and American cultures have to be defined as extremes.[18]

This tendency can have several undesirable consequences. First of all, Canada is too easily seen to be just as unpalatable a product as the Laodicean Church of Holy

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[17] Hugh MacLennan, "Canadian National Identity," in Stanley, p. 25.

[18] "Conclusion to a Literary History of Canada," The Bush Garden (Toronto, 1971), p. 218.

Writ, who, being neither cold nor hot, were summarily spewed out of the Lord's mouth (Revelation 3:16). It is all too easy to attach value judgements either good or bad to the influencing polarities; in either case, the result is not particularly complimentary to Canada.

On the other hand, undue emphasis can be placed on Canada's mediatory role between such extreme influences. The somewhat unrealistic resultant expectations are outlined in the following accolade by Winston Churchill:

> The long, unguarded frontier, the habits and intercourse of daily life, the fruitful and profitable connections of business, the sympathies and even the antipathies of honest neighborliness, make Canada a binder-together of the English-speaking peoples. She is a magnet exercising a double attraction, drawing both Great Britain and the United States towards herself and thus drawing them closer to each other. She is the only surviving bond which stretches from Europe across the Atlantic Ocean. In fact, no state, no country, no band of men can more truly be described as the linchpin of peace and world progress.[19]

This sort of effluence is downright embarrassing, even to the most chauvinistic of Canadian nationalists. Granted, these words were spoken more than thirty years ago, but they show how Canada's unique essence can be overlooked if the country is presumed to be a mere amalgam of the best - or worst - elements of two artificial extremes.

What conclusions is one to draw when faced with the realization not only that it is difficult to ascertain the qualities of any nation's identity because the very concept resists the confinement of a definition, but that a number of factors deriving from the nature of Canada itself also impede any convincing account of this nation's unique characteristics? Is it legitimate to conclude that the sense each Canadian has that there is something he has in common with other Canadians, and that he differs in some indefinable way from the members of other nations, is the product of nation-wide delusion? Must one finally admit that all discussions of the Canadian identity are mere exercises in futility?

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[19] Winston Churchill, quoted in Bruce Hutchison, The Unknown Country (Toronto, 1948), p. 227.

Not at all. Recognition of the obstacles to a confident articulation of the Canadian identity, and a considerably comprehensive exploration of how the unique qualities of Canada have been conveyed in recent Canadian novels, has led me to draw the following conclusions in connection with the topic of the Canadian identity - conclusions which have determined the shape of what is to follow in this study. First of all, I would suggest that the Canadian identity, while it cannot be defined in the concise terms traditionally required of a definition, can certainly be illuminated. Secondly, I have discovered that this illumination is best provided by a consideration of prominent attitudes and concerns in the consciousness of many Canadians. Thirdly, I have found that our creative writers, as articulate extensions of our corporate national consciousness, are the ones most capable of giving vital shape to that community of values and opinions which continues to shape and revise our national identity. Fourthly, I would submit that the impediments to the formation of a national identity in Canada can themselves be seen as components of that identity, not competitors. The very coexistence of diverse loyalties and interests can thus be considered as one of the most notable characteristics of this country's national identity. For this reason many of the individual components of that identity discussed in the ensuing chapters will in themselves seem to offer little insight into the Canadian identity. Sometimes these components will by no means be unique to Canada (the chapter on the small town is a good example). The more elements there are in the mosaic, however, the more convincing and unique the composite picture of the Canadian nation will be.

I am very much aware that some of the best criticism about our literature in recent years has been governed by the conviction that a dominant theme or concern characterizes the Canadian literary imagination. Margaret Atwood sees us as a nation of losers,[20] John Moss as a nation of loners.[21] For D. G. Jones most of the images and themes in our literature are derived from the immediacy and prominence of our natural environment,[22] while Ronald Sutherland insists that in order for an author to be considered as writing in the mainstream of Canadian literature he must demonstrate an awareness of the two major ethnic groups in Canada, the French and the English.[23] Without exception these studies have acted as lively and intelligent vehicles for examining Canadian literature, and as such they are welcome and useful tools of explication and assessment. But they must be seen as descriptive only, never prescriptive. They may profess to explain _a_ dominant theme in our literature, never _the_ dominant theme, for such an attempt at homogeneity is obliged to ignore the inescapable paradox that Canada's identity requires the negotiation of diversity. Another potential weakness in such studies is their tendency to take inadequate account of the presence of those same themes and preoccupations in modern literature as a whole, not merely its Canadian component. Survival, for one example, or alienation, for another, are prominent concerns in that larger context, and thus they are very questionable contributors to the feeling of uniqueness that a sense of national identity assumes.

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[20] Margaret Atwood, Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature. Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 1972.

[21] John Moss, Patterns of Isolation in English Canadian Fiction. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1974.

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[22] D. G. Jones, _Butterfly on Rock: A Study of Themes and Images in Canadian Literature_. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970.

[23] Ronald Sutherland, _Second Image: Comparative Studies in Quebec/Canadian Literature_. Toronto: New Press, 1971.

I felt that I could best present my discoveries about the elements of our national identity as illuminated in recent Canadian fiction by establishing a topical structure based upon some of the social, historical, and geophysical[24] realities of this country. The next chapter will explain further the methods and presuppositions that governed my investigation. I should mention a word here about my footnoting technique. The first reference to a book in each chapter receives full footnote documentation. Subsequent references to the book within the same chapter will be documented by a parenthetical page reference immediately following the quotation.

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[24] John Moss's term in Patterns of Isolation, p. 109ff.

II. Procedures and Postulates

Scope of this Study

This study outlines discoveries made about the Canadian identity as a result of my inductive examination of some eighty Canadian novels and short story collections published between 1965 and 1971 inclusive. Several novels appearing in 1972 and 1973 were subsequently added to bring the survey reasonably up to date. The complete list of these fictional works is to be found under "Primary Sources" in the Bibliography. My primary intention was to study this body of literature; my discussion of the elements of the Canadian identity is providing the organizing principle as well as the focus for the presentation of my discoveries about this material.

I undertook this whole investigation in order to ascertain the effect on this nation's fiction writers of the intense nation-wide resurgence of interest in the Canadian identity in the years immediately preceding and following the 1967 celebration of Canada's centennial. The new outlook aroused by Expo, the most extravagant production of many developed to commemorate this event, was described by Hugo McPherson as follows:

> We have our own "scene" in Canada now. . . . It's no longer fashionable, the way it used to be, for Canadians to knock everything Canadian. Perhaps Expo will be the event we'll all remember as the roadmark. I think

> it's going to be a vast Canadianizing force, not only in Quebec but all across the country.[1]

The novels for this study were chosen initially on the basis of the brief reviews contained in the annual "Letters in Canada: Fiction" section of University of Toronto Quarterly. I did not limit my selection to those novels which the particular reviewer considered to be the most outstanding in each year, although I tended to choose these for review automatically. I also tried to select novels covering what these reviews demonstrated to be topics of recurrent interest to Canadian writers - French-English relations, the Americanization of Canadian culture, the experiences of both ex-patriates and immigrants, and so on. My initial list consisted of some eighty titles, representing approximately one-half of the total works of fiction discussed in these annual reviews.

Because of the limits imposed by space more than anything else, I did not consider it appropriate to engage in a lengthy discussion of how the over-all fictional vision of Canada in these recent novels compares with novels written in the less immediate past. I would have definite reservations about the value of such a comparison in any event, unless the analyst of national character undertook to explain rather than merely document not only areas of national self-awareness that were changing, but also perceptions that were remaining relatively static. Suffice it to say that anyone even casually familiar with Canadian literature will recognize that most of the topics discussed in this study have interested Canadian literary artists and critics for some time.

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[1] Hugo McPherson, quoted in Mordecai Richler, Hunting Tigers Under Glass (Toronto, 1968), p. 36.

It seems to me eminently appropriate to examine, as this survey does, a nation's identity as portrayed during a particular brief period of its history, for, as discussed in the previous chapter, national identity is the retention of a nation's individuality in the context of changing circumstances. W. L. Morton identifies several important developments that have been altering the Canadian self-image in recent years: the new tone and temper in French Canada, reflected in the so-called Quiet Revolution - Quebec's revolt against her past, and the growth of separatism - Quebec's revolt against the rest of Canada; the decline of Great Britain in the world, and thus the diminishing of her role as the inspiration of Canadian life; and the greater than ever threat of the Americanization of Canadian thought, purpose, institutions, and cultural ideals.[2] These developments are moving Canadians to question the nature of the Canadian experiment more acutely than ever before. Inhabitants of this country are now anxious to discover, as Mordecai Richler expressed it, "a culture-cum-national identity that amounts to something less nebulous than being nicer than Americans and not as snobby as the British. . . ."[3]

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[2] W. L. Morton, The Canadian Identity (Toronto, 1972), Chapter V.

Literary Presuppositions

There are several assumptions of a literary nature which have provided the foundation for my approach in this survey. The first of these is my belief that a nation's creative literature provides a most important reservoir of evidence as to how that nation achieved a sense of national identity and what the main aspects of that identity were at a specific point in time. The literary artist can perform two functions in this connection. First of all, he may attempt to capture the essence of a particular time and place, the current trend of opinions and values, or the emotions and feelings aroused by some historical event that has contributed to the outlook of his characters. In these several ways he acts as the reflector or documenter of the age; his readers may obtain insight into the elements of national identity, sometimes by explicit statement, but more often by implication. This role of the creative writer as the elucidator of national identity is described by E. K. Brown:

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[3] Hunting Tigers Under Glass, p. 14.

> . . . one of the forces that can help a civilization to come of age is the presentation of its surfaces and depths in works of imagination in such a fashion that the reader says: "I now understand myself and my milieu with a fullness and a clearness greater than before."[4]

The literary artist can also perform another function - that of articulating certain aspirations and hopes that may help to determine the very fabric of a nation's identity. In short, national identity becomes the product of the writer's creation of myth. Whether what he conveys about the elements of national identity is accurate is much less important than whether his art moves his audience to believe his creation embodies what they *wish* to be the truth. Sometimes the kind of characters he creates become models for that nation to emulate or shun. Sir Ernest Barker remarks on how the gallery of figures in Homer affected both the religious and ethical life of the Greeks, and how the characters in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* performed a similar function for the English.[5] Or again, the creative writer may expose social ills that move men to actions that may change the whole complexion of a nation. There is little doubt that Dickens' novels had this sort of effect on nineteenth century England, for example. In these several functions the literary artist helps to form some elements of national identity, acting therefore as more than the mere documenter of those elements.

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[4] Quoted in Vincent Massey, *On Being Canadian* (Toronto, 1948), p. 33.

[5] Sir Ernest Barker, *National Character and the Factors in Its Formation* (London, 1948), p. 192.

Commentators on the role of the literary artist in relation to a nation's identity often tend to expound one or the other of these two functions. Both Malcolm Wallace and Northrop Frye stress the artist as reflector of national identity in the following assertions:

> . . . if you wish to know another people well, there is no better approach to your task than by familiarizing yourself with their history and their literature. . . . On these are stamped their national character, their responses to joy and sorrow, to good fortune and bad, what things they admired and what they detested. They are graven here not intentionally, nor for a purpose, but unconsciously and inevitably.[6]

> It is obvious that Canadian literature, whatever its inherent merits, is an indispensable aid to the knowledge of Canada. It records what the Canadian imagination has reacted to, and it tells us things about this environment that nothing else will tell us.[7]

On the other hand, Aldous Huxley emphasized the role of the artist as creator of national identity when he asserted:

> Nations are to a large extent invented by their poets and novelists. The inadequacy of German drama and the German novel perhaps explains the curious uncertainty and artificiality of character displayed by

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[6] Malcolm W. Wallace, English Character and the English Literary Tradition (Toronto, 1952), p. 5.

[7] N. Frye, "Conclusion to a Literary History of Canada," The Bush Garden (Toronto, 1971), p. 215.

> so many of the Germans whom one meets in daily life.
> Thanks to a long succession of admirable dramatists and novelists, Frenchmen and Englishmen know exactly how they ought to behave.[8]

To put the case somewhat simply, a nation's literature can have the effect of making people more conscious of themselves and the distinctive elements of their physical and social environment. The writer is not necessarily consciously trying to do this, although at the same time one must hasten to add that he usually does have a particular kind of audience in mind, and he likely has given careful thought to transmitting the sense of a particular place and time to that audience. What I am saying is that the artist will rarely have thought to himself, "I am setting out in this book to inform my compatriots about our national identity." The elements of national identity are more than likely to be determined by inference: some of the themes in his novel may arise out of the distinctives of a particular environment, or the writer may provide insight into some of the social problems that plague his country, or he may transmit the particular feelings of one part of the country towards another. As this study is hoping to demonstrate, there are numerous ways in which the elements of national identity can be conveyed.

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[8] Aldous Huxley, Texts and Pretexts, as quoted in Frank Birbalsingh, "National Identity and the Canadian Novel," Journal of Canadian Fiction, 1 (Winter, 1972), 57.

The fiction writer not only can give his compatriots a better appreciation of their nation's essence; readers in other countries can also gain greater understanding of that nation by reading its creative literature. Thomas Carlyle, writing in 1827, remarked:

> A country which has no national literature, or a literature too insignificant to force its way abroad, must always be, to its neighbours, at least in every important spiritual aspect, an unknown and misestimated country.[9]

Of course this imposes a problem upon the artist, although at times I wonder if it isn't more of a literary red herring than a valid issue, and that is the difficulty of writing for several audiences of varying backgrounds. E. K. Brown, Hugh MacLennan and others have talked about the dilemma facing the Canadian writer, who has too small a reading public in his native land to provide him with any degree of financial stability, and yet who will insult the intelligence of those same readers by providing background that will make his story comprehensible to an international readership. It seems to me that novels which deal with universal human issues need not worry unduly about international appeal, in spite of strong regional distinctives present in the work. B. K. Sandwell explicitly resists the suggestion that Canadian novels should be addressed to other than a Canadian audience:

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[9] Thomas Carlyle, as quoted in Douglas Grant, "Nationalism and the Literature of the United States," Proceedings of the British Academy, 53 (June, 1967), 179.

> Nothing will contribute more to an interest in Canada on the part of Americans than a rich artistic treatment by Canadians of their own material, and that treatment must be designed primarily for Canadians and not for any foreign market.[10]

In his roles as either the reflector or the creator of national identity, the fiction writer possesses some unique advantages over the social historian, political essayist, or journalist. One of these is his opportunity to invent situations in which consideration of aspects of national identity will be part of a larger issue - the examination, in short, of what it means to be human. He also has available a wider variety of techniques for getting at the issues of national identity by psychological penetration in the creation of character, by introduction of conflict, by vivid portrayal of local colour, dialect, natural backgound, and so forth. Furthermore, his vehicle of the fictionalized narrative has greater potential for interesting the reader in issues of national identity than almost any other medium.

At the same time, however, the fiction writer faces greater temptations than other articulators of a nation's experience. He has to avoid the tendency to be overly rhetorical about the issues confronting his characters. In addition, he must avoid introducing facile analogies or contrived solutions in order to simplify the complexities and inconsistencies that any examination of a nation's identity usually produces.

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[10] B. K. Sandwell, "Present Day Influences on Canadian Society," A Selection of Essays, ed. Massey Royal Commission, pp. 7-8.

A second closely-related presupposition that is really implied in this assumption about literary works as a reservoir of national identity is my belief that most significant works of literature are to some extent distinctively national - in the sense that Lorne Pierce meant when he explained, "All great art and great literature are in the best sense national, for they speak with authority of time and place, milieu and tradition."[11] He goes on to suggest that Canadian arts and letters are "the proudest and most potent symbols of separate national existence and ambition." Adele Wiseman pointed out the inevitability that these elements of national character would be transmitted in a work of art when she asserted, in an address to the Royal Society of Canada, that if the national existence that a literary artist attempts to examine, interpret, evaluate and re-create

> . . . has been formed, shaped, coloured, determined in any way by a specific social order and a specific locale and a specific nationality and a specific history, these, for better or worse, to the greater or lesser embarrassment or pride or chagrin on the part of those who share that locale and that nationality will

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[11] Lorne Pierce, A Canadian Nation (Toronto, 1960), p. 8.

> be inseparably and indelibly worked into the fabric of the work of art.[12]

It is admittedly conceivable that a work of art could reflect an identity with larger or smaller dimensions than a nation, however. The social order Wiseman speaks of could be tribal, or even continental, rather than national. For most modern writers, however, the conception of nation is usually a stronger influence than that of continental or tribal identities.

Another assumption which governed this study is implied in Wiseman's assertion, and that is that the elements of national identity are usually conveyed implicitly during the process of artistic discovery, rather than by explicit statement. Vincent Massey distinguishes between literature or art that is self-consciously Canadian and that which is "an honest and convincing interpretation of things Canadian." He continues:

> The task of either artist or writer is, after all, not to talk about his country, but to interpret what he sees around him. Art with a mission ceases to be art. No artist can be asked to become the conscious bearer of a national message. Art can easily be degraded to the level of propaganda whereupon it ceases to be art.[13]

I do not entirely agree with Massey's implication that the artist who consciously sets out to convey his perception of his country is bound to fail. It is only when he tries too explicitly to arouse his readers to a change of attitude or course of action that his artistic success will likely be impaired. Massey also ignores the great difficulty of deciding whether or not to impute didactic or propagandistic motives to an author whenever such self-conscious nationalism in art is encountered, much less ascertaining its literary effect. Walt Whitman was often very self-consciously nationalistic in Leaves of Grass, yet few would argue with his poetic importance. Yet Massey's point, however inadequate, is often put forward. A good proportion of the observations I make about the Canadian identity in this study will be the product of a process of inference, although my documentation of explicit remarks about Canada and the Canadian experience will contribute significantly to the tableau I am endeavouring to create.

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[12] Adele Wiseman, "English Writing in Canada: The Future," Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Ser.IV, Vol.V (June, 1967), p. 46.

[13] Vincent Massey, On Being Canadian (Toronto, 1948), p. 35.

A fourth principle governing this study is that it is intended to be more an exploration than an assessment of this body of Canadian fiction. I concur with Northrop Frye's remark that . . . "To study Canadian literature properly, one must outgrow the view that evaluation is the end of criticism, instead of its incidental by-product."[14]

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[14] "Conclusion to a Literary History of Canada," in The Bush Garden, p. 213.

Canadian criticism seems to me to be too often plagued by paragraph dismissals of works of Canadian literature without sufficient evidence to suggest that a serious effort has been made to understand first of all the vision the literary artist was attempting to impart. At this stage of Canadian literary study, I feel the critic's most important task is to identify the structure of the artistic vision, not prognosticate on how long that structure is likely to remain standing. This is particularly important in a study such as this, for I have made these observations about the Canadian identity primarily on the basis of what the artist conveys about the Canadian experience, not on how well he conveys it. Also, the scope of this study did not allow for the kind of detailed literary assessment that most of these works deserve. I have tried to make evaluatory comments, however, whenever I felt that the artist's vision was being obstructed because of his particular literary method or style.

Finally, as I indicated in the previous chapter, it has become most apparent to me during the course of this study that our national identity emerges only after a consideration of the diversity of elements in the Canadian experience. It is impossible to assert in any simplified way what the Canadian identity is, but it is equally futile to conclude, as so many detractors have, that what is difficult to analyze therefore doesn't exist or is not important. The vision in any one work is fragmented and blurred even at the best of times, but I have discovered that the picture clears remarkably when an in-depth survey such as this one of a large number of novels published within a short period of time is undertaken.

Germain Warkentin, disheartened on one occasion by the multifarious definitions of the Canadian identity that have been put forth from time to time, compared such attempts to the legendary efforts of three blind men to describe an elephant, adding, "Some of the descriptions have been worth something, but what they add up to is fragmented, indecipherable."[15] The analogy is witty, but it is misleading on two counts. In the first place, it implies that the Canadian identity though monstrous is ultimately monolithic - that is, that it can be defined in relatively specific terms provided the viewer stands back far enough from the object of his contemplation. Secondly, Warkentin implies that the Canadian identity is concrete - a "thing" indeed, rather than a relationship, an attitude, a system of values, a rationalization of a bond between peoples, a common determination to be separate and therefore unique. To give life to such abstractions - this is the function of art.

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[15] Germain Warkentin, quoted in Margaret Atwood, "Eleven Years of 'Alphabet,'" Canadian Literature, No. 49 (Summer, 1971), p. 60.

III. The Typical Canadian: Defining Canadian Identity in terms of National Character

Theoretical Objections to National Character Types

Fiction writers who are either consciously or unconsciously depicting some of the national distinctives of their country frequently display a propensity to create typical national characters who ostensibly embody some of that country's unique values and attitudes.

The chief fault of this approach to depicting national identity is its tendency to over-simplify the situation by ignoring some of the complex polarizing issues in a society - to sacrifice an honest confrontation with unsolvable paradox by engaging in bland representativeness. In Chapter I some of the factors that make this propensity particularly serious for Canadian writers who are attempting to come to grips with some of the discursive elements of the Canadian identity were outlined. In view of these centrifugal elements in our society, the attempt to make homogeneous images of a typical Canadian, or to make meaningful statements about Canadian national characteristics, seems destined for inevitable failure. Douglas LePan put his finger on this inadequacy as follows:

> [Canadian writers] are subject to the uncertainties that arise from living in a national community with indeterminate features. No one can tell yet what mask to carve for Canada, which type to choose - a pulp savage or a bank teller . . . whether the face should

> be serene and adventurous, or withdrawn and introspective. No one can tell for certain yet whether Canada is one nation or two. The country reveals itself only slowly even to those who love it most, and much of its character still remains ambiguous.[1]

Yet in spite of these difficulties in describing the Canadian national character, the attempt has been made, and surprisingly frequently. It is my purpose in this chapter to examine some recent examples of such attempts to create a typical national Canadian.

National character types are imaginative creations embodying traits that people think to be true about the majority of a country's inhabitants. They may be based partially upon purportedly concrete evidence, but more frequently they are affirmations based on conjecture, articulated sometimes by politicians in support or defence of some national cause, at other times by writers or commentators as the explanation for certain presumed national propensities. Often they embody opinions about one's own country or another nation that are evaluatory in nature. But most important of all, such national stereotypes cannot be verified or disproved by appealing to factual scientific evidence. It is sufficient that they exist in some form of consensus in the minds of a nation's populace.

There are several consequences if this assumption that national stereotypes are not necessarily derived from empirical deductive evidence is true. One is that such mental images, being based partly on the vagaries of public opinion, are susceptible to rather frequent changes at the whims of national image-makers, be they politicians, journalists, or even serious writers. Fyfe gave a good example of this in his book, The Illusion of National Character, written at the end of the Second World War:

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[1] Douglas V. LePan, "The Dilemma of the Canadian Author," Atlantic Monthly, 214 (Nov., 1964), 160.

> Fifty years ago the national character of the Germans was generally supposed to be intelligent, kindly, peaceable, gently patriotic, home-loving, music-loving, studious, agreeable. From 1914 to 1919, your life was not safe in Britain, France, or the United States if you did not call them bloodthirsty savages, cruel, aggressive, unfit to be in Europe. From 1933 to 1939 they were poor fish, trembling at the nod of pinchbeck despots, enthused by flatulent oratory, forced to shout in obedient unison their approval of whatever their tyrants might do. Then they became devils again.[2]

This statement was made in support of Fyfe's contention that there is no such thing as innate national character differences. What he takes insufficient account of in his book is the fact that while assumptions about national characteristics may not be demonstratably true, the very fact that people believe them to be true gives these characteristics an imaginative existence that can exert a profound effect upon individual attitude and action. Malcolm Wallace makes this distinction between verifiable and assumed national character traits as follows:

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[2] Hamilton Fyfe, The Illusion of National Character (London, 1946), p. 38.

> We are never on more slippery ground than when we attempt to define national characteristics. Our wisest generalizations about the characters of Englishmen, Frenchmen, or Italians can usually be shown to be contradicted by actual examples. . . . And yet no one really doubts that an Englishman, a German, and a Frenchman differ from each other in fundamental ways, and illustrate in their thinking the results of their respective cultures and traditions. . . . although in discussing national characteristics we may be tempted to generalize too sweepingly, the residuum of genuine truth cannot be ignored.[3]

Writers of fiction can be among a country's chief creators of national type characters. Often traits of a national stereotype will be created as the writer describes some of the forces which are molding the characters he is creating. At other times he may make reference to such an archetypal figure as the basis whereby a character assesses his own search for individual identity. He may wish to account for certain actions or attitudes of characters by relating them to social pressures represented by a national archetype. If his intent is satirical, he or his characters may pass denigrating remarks about other people who conform to a national stereotype he has created. The author's efforts may even be quasi-patriotic: to move his readers to recognize certain values as essential and desirable, which values may be articulated in terms of a national stereotype. Porter seems to have this last function of the literary artist in mind in the following remark:

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[3] English Character and the English Literary Tradition (Toronto, 1952), p. 17.

> To ensure that a value system does not become so vague that it ceases to perform its social function of providing cohesion, it is necessary to build into certain social roles the task of restating and generalizing values. Individuals who have a particular facility with the written and spoken word and can manipulate symbols assume these ideological roles.[*]

Symons' *Place d'Armes* and the Typical Canadian

It is now possible to examine from a reasonably informed perspective some of the ways in which recent Canadian fiction writers have created or reaffirmed qualities which are supposedly possessed by a typical Canadian. My central thesis in this discussion is that such attempts are consistently unconvincing because they ascribe a monolithicity of personality and outlook to a national group who take pride in their diversities rather than their similarities, but who at the same time are resolved to live together and thus by implication be distinct from other national groups.

A highly experimental attempt to investigate the nature of his Canadian identity is to be found in the journal-cum-confessional-cum-novel by Scott Symons, published in centennial year, entitled *Combat Journal for Place d'Armes: A Personal Narrative*. This journal ostensibly records the pilgrimage of the Anglo-Canadian protagonist to Montreal's

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[*] *The Vertical Mosaic* (Toronto, 1965), p. 459.

Place d'Armes, the square that the first-person narrator, Hugh Anderson, calls the "heart of Canada"[5] - its ideological or spiritual heart, that is, for he goes on to remark that other Canadian squares have no heart. As John Matthews suggests, Place d'Armes is a microcosm that contains ". . . all the elements of the narrator's identity, French and English, new and old, spiritual and material, separate yet together."[6] Anderson has come here both to escape from what he feels to be the debilitating aspects of his Toronto Tory environment, and also to discover the vitality and sense of hope that he feels sure is latent in his nation and in himself.

Symons explores the Canadian identity by creating a protagonist who is supposedly a typical product of the life-denying characteristics of the Canadian culture which the book is attacking. He is described as having all the credentials of Toronto conservative middle-class Wasp orthodoxy: the son of Colonel and Mrs. Anderson, educated at Upper Canada College, Trinity College of U. of T., and St. John's College of Oxford, director of publications on Canadian history and literature for six years at a Toronto publishing house after a four-year stint with the C.B.C. in

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[5] Scott Symons, Combat Journal for Place d'Armes: A Personal Narrative (Toronto, 1967), p. 2.

[6] J. Matthews, "The Inner Logic of a People," Mosaic, 1 (April, 1968), 48.

Montreal, and author of a book on Canadian taste - all of which qualify him as ". . . an impeccable cursus honorum canadensis."(p. 18) His coming to Montreal represents a revolt against the values of this orthodoxy; also, because of his prior experience in Montreal, he has a strong suspicion that the missing dimension of his life may be found among the French-Canadian compatriots he has long admired, though from a distance. His journal records his attempts to understand the true nature of the square and of himself - what he calls ". . . some deeper assault on reality than I care to admit."(p.23) Throughout the work there are references to the relationships between the journal, the fictional figure, Andrew, who is going to be the narrator Anderson himself, thinly disguised, in the novel he is hoping to write about his adventures, and himself.

This all sounds very confusing, and, to be perfectly blunt, it is, for there are four distinct narrative levels in Symons' book. First of all, there is Symons' third-person account of some of Anderson's exploits, supplemented, secondly, by frequent reversions to Anderson's first-person accounts of the same experiences. In addition, the entries in Anderson's journal take two forms: either notes in first-person narrative by Andrew, the protagonist of Anderson's anticipated novel, or third-person narration by Anderson of Andrew's adventures. Symons is not the least bit subtle in his attempt to resolve this almost impossible welter of personae: he employs four different sizes of type, one for each narrative viewpoint.

This literary theme and variations seems unnecessarily complicated, particularly since there is so little difference between Andrew and Hugh (and, one could likely add, Symons himself). It does admirably convey, however, the uncertainty attendant upon any attempt to articulate the Canadian identity - an impression that is further verified by the very fact that the work is not a novel, but only tentative notes for one. Indeed, the author solves the problem of what to call this work by giving it several names:

> [It is] . . . at once a first novel, a meticulously tangled diary, an insanely indiscreet autobiography, and existential Canadian allegory, a book of illicit imagination that is pure fact, an implacable manifesto.(scrawled on outside back cover)

Furthermore, the fact that the style frequently verges on inarticulation still more indelibly underlines the tentative character of the whole investigation. As a matter of fact, the narrator makes several references to this inarticulateness as one of the chief behavioural traits of his version of the typical Canadian, which in turn is a consequence of the larger context of negation and self-denial that the narrator suggests lies at the root of the Canadian psyche. Symons symbolizes Canadian inarticulateness about our true identity as a form of constipation, which he relates somewhat bewilderingly to the refusal to indulge our sentient capacities at will, symbolically represented as the effects of castration. The basis for Anderson's preference for French-Canadians now becomes clear - he values their relative lack of inhibition when it comes to gratifying their sensual appetites. Two homosexual encounters shortly after his arrival in Montreal, and an extended relationship later on, demonstrate how thoroughly he has rejected the Tory Toronto values from which he had fled. Anderson had admitted earlier in the book that his activities would shock the sensibilities of his readers, for conformity had been sacrificed to "vehement, brutal life" (p. 46) - something he feels the French would understand better than the English. Later on, he describes the denial by English-speaking Canadians of their impulses and passions as the basic problem in Canadian society:

> It is all so obvious - our political impasse, our cultural impasse, our personal impasse . . . our impasse as a people - they all derive from our gelding! What we must do is find out who is gelding us, and why. . . . (p. 92)

The perpetrator of the dastardly deed is soon identified: it is Canadians themselves! Anderson encounters a friend, a gifted artist and writer, who has chosen the comfortable, secure life of an Ottawa civil servant in lieu of the less secure but more worthwhile life of a creative artist. He castigates his former friend as follows for making this decision:

> No English Canadian, no Anglicanadian, can face up to his own cock. We flee from it. . . . You have fled it. . . . You have made that denial, not positively but negatively. . . you have evaded the confrontation. And in maiming yourself that way, in failing to honour your sensibility, in doing that deliberate craven injustice to yourself, you have assumed a guilt that corrodes you. And you now expiate the crime, you now flagellate yourself by becoming the perfect upper caste Canadian Civil Servant. Your "martyrdom" is a negative expiation of your crime. It means you become a member of our eunuchoidal Canadian Corps at Ottawa . . . and that you too will impose on our nation a gutless culture in your own self-defaced image.(p. 160)

As I mentioned earlier, Symons sees the Anglo-Canadian's sexual and volitional impotence reflected in a verbal impotence - a powerlessness to articulate deep feelings and thoughts. Bill Gaunt, a friend of Hugh Anderson who writes for one of the Montreal dailies, describes his own version of English Canada's national verbal constipation as follows:

> . . . whenever I come to write what I really feel, whenever I set myself in front of a clean sheet of paper, I flee - there is some kind of mental stutter to us [Note how suddenly the personal inhibition has been converted to national proportions]. As though it can't be said. . . I sometimes feel that to say it would kill it, kill us . . . there they have us - they know once we say us we have done us in . . . have lost our secret - our private potence.(p. 91)

Anderson himself makes a similar remark about the pain of self-expression sustained by a person of his ilk in order to produce his journalistic etchings. After expressing a passing wish to have been born a Jew, and thus be a member of a "fraternity of exiles . . . a culture of expostulation," he asks:

> But what of the goddam Legitimist, Establishment, Hereditary, Infeodated, Loyalist, Christian Canadian Tory? For him to speak his mind . . . requires a Counter-Revolution at least. And - worse (or better!) - for him to bespeak his sensibility requires at least a nervous breakdown! (p. 140)

Not only are explicit remarks made about Canadians' verbal inadequacies; there are numerous occasions on which this fault is evident in the language of the book itself. The following is a good example. Hugh, taking a pot-shot at Canada's new flag, remarks:

> Take the new flag . . . that is as good a symbol as any of the dissolution I feel. Every time I look at that frigging Maple Leaf I dissolve. I simply cease to exist. It's not a question of patriotism - my family's been tangled up with the New World for over two centuries now. It's a question of reality. Take just the visual fact of the flag. It's a non-flag. . . . I can't explain it. (p. 5)

The reader is no wiser as to the basis for his disenchantment after reading this aborted diatribe than before.

In spite of the protagonist's [Andrew, in this case] realization ". . . that he had been brought up to negate reality - to flee plenitude - to cauterize joy," (p. 135) in spite of this portrayal of the typical Canadian as either constipated or castrated, or both, there is evidence that Symons' motives are constructive rather than derogatory in this rather unpleasant but thought-provoking book. For one thing, both Symons and his protagonist are devoted Canadian patriots; Symons describes himself on the fly-leaf of the book as . . . "A Para-Canadian, released from any allegiance to the Canadian State but obsessively devoted to the

Canadian Nation," and Hugh Anderson asserts early in the novel that he wanted his account of his experiences in Place d'Armes to glow with ". . . love of his community, his nation, his people."(p. 3) Later, after stating that he is intending to excnerate his culture by means of his writing, he asserts, "But I know I still hope . . . that in the saying someone will see, and that . . . it won't be too late."(p. 141) Thus, in the very act of writing about the Canadian culture lies the hope for its survival as far as Symons is concerned, and its survival is needed, if only because it is ". . . the particular and distinctive culture that distinguishes this country from the Amurricans [sic]. . . ."(p. 90)

Symons' book illustrates some of the theories I suggested at the beginning of this chapter about the pitfalls attendant on attempts to make homogeneous statements about the character of the Canadian people. The portrait that he draws is defined almost completely in negative terms. Symons also portrays the protagonist, clearly a member of the middle class, as a supposedly typical representative English Canadian, at least until he abandons all for Montreal. But John Porter has dispelled once and for all the myth that there is a large middle class in Canada, or that they can by any stretch of the imagination be thought of as representative Canadians. Porter explains the reason for the perpetuation of this false impression:

> Images which conflict with the one of middle class equality rarely find expression, partly because the literate middle class is both the producer and the consumer of the images.[7]

It would appear that Scott Symons has been taken in by this very myth, and has helped to maintain its existence.

Another obstacle to credibility evident in Symons' characterization of the typical Anglo-Canadian is his assumption that Toronto-based values are necessarily shared by the rest of Canada. There is no mention whatsoever of parts of Canada other than Ottawa, Toronto, and Montreal, yet he does not hesitate to presume that values in those parts of Canada are representative of values in the rest of Canada.

Perhaps the most serious weakness of all in this book is the very tenuous generalizations Symons makes about the psychosexual make-up and values of the Tory Canadian square. I found particularly unconvincing the cause-effect relationship suggested between sexual inadequacy and artistic inhibition. Also, it is remarkable that all the protagonist's attempts to show his qualifications as a sentient being involve encounters of a sexually deviant nature. Both narrators seem singularly incapable of demonstrating their release from inhibition by engaging in normal heterosexual adventures. It seems strange that self-discovery finds expression within such narrow limits.

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[7] _The Vertical Mosaic_, p. 6.

Finally, the idealistic image of the French-Canadian as full of vitality and joie de vivre is as contrivedly optimistic as its Anglo-Canadian counterpart is pessimistic. Because of the vehemence with which he rejects his past, the protagonist seems to be blinded to the sense of inferiority and resentment, or to the awareness of bondage to figures of authority both religious and secular, which have often characterized French Canadians. It is refreshing to see another side to this image, for it reveals the stereotyped nature of those attributes, but that construction cannot completely ignore its predecessor with such impunity.

Symons has thus seriously undermined the effectiveness of his book by burdening a potentially vivid character with the obligation of displaying or rejecting supposedly representative Anglo-Canadian attitudes. Although his insights are often instructive and occasionally even thought-provoking, the events of the narrative and the stereotyped qualities of the protagonist are so clearly contrived to serve his didactic intention of excoriating what he feels to be the inhibiting aspects of Canadian society that the credibility of the work as fiction is seriously marred.

And yet, in spite of these flaws, Place d'Armes is an important book. This is apparent partly because of Symons' attempt to probe the pro's and con's of Canadian national experience. Its importance is also evident when one becomes aware of how frequently Symons' themes are taken up by other novelists.

The Persistent Depiction of Quasi-National Qualities

A trait that has often been considered a commonplace attribute of the Canadian character is the absence of passion, the expression of which supposedly demands two circumstances that have always been considered to be at a premium in Canada: leisure time and permissiveness. In The Manticore, a novel otherwise strikingly different from Symons' book, Robertson Davies identifies this central inhibition of Canadians in terms very similar to those of the earlier writer. The narrator is describing the lion and the unicorn on the coat of arms in the imaginary courtroom where the protagonist, David Staunton, a criminal lawyer, is trying himself as part of the process of psychoanalysis he is undergoing in Zurich. Unlike their counterparts on the real Canadian coat-of-arms, these beasts are "complete," which means that their private parts are prominently visible. The narrator continues:

> To be heraldically correct they should have distinct, rather saucy pizzles. But in Canada we geld everything, if we can, and dozens of times I have sat in court and looked at those pitifully deprived animals and thought how they exemplified our attitude towards justice. Everything that spoke of passion . . . was

> ruled out of order or disguised as something else. Only Reason was welcome.[8]

In this instance, this quality of the national character is expressed in terms of its effect on national values and ensuing behaviour, although it is noteworthy that the author makes no apparent attempt to show an actual outworking of this in terms of character and episode. In another novel, Erebus, Robert Hunter incorporates this quality more directly into the action of the story when he explains why a particular character known as "the Ebb" makes such an impact on his social environment:

> In this country, where young men, sensing their true lack of passion, go through grotesque contortions to match the vulgar emotionalism of Hollywood, the Ebb was a refreshing change. There was an air of perversity about him.[9]

Note again how the absence of passion is assumed to be a national deficiency, and how the possession of passion, even though unexpressed overtly, is associated with perversity.

Another assumption about the typical Canadian that other novelists share with Symons is that he is a member of the Canadian middle class. I have already drawn attention to John Porter's very convincing demonstration that members of the middle class in fact form only a small minority of the Canadian population, and that the average Canadian in economic reality is rather significantly below that level of existence. Of course the failure to attain middle-class standards in economic terms does not prohibit a widespread espousal of middle-class values. This vicarious adoption of another's values is explained by Northrop Frye in a 1965 essay as the consequence of the garrison mentality in Canada, in which the inhabitants in order to survive the rigours of a hostile environment are obliged to adopt the values of their leaders:

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[8] Robertson Davies, The Manticore (Toronto, 1972), p. 57.

[9] Robert Hunter, Erebus (Toronto, 1968), p. 95.

> The garrison mentality is that of its officers: it can tolerate only the conservative idealism of its working class, which for Canada means the moral and propertied middle class.[10]

There are a surprising number of explicit references to this adoption of middle-class values by those not strictly belonging to that class in the fiction under consideration. Tiercel Margrave, the eminently successful Toronto middle-class Tory M.P. in Adrienne Clarkson's Hunger Trace, tells Regina Adler, the novel's first-person narrator, with whom Margrave has formed an illicit liaison, that his family was "Dying of creeping middle-classness. Death by caution."[11] Regina replies, "Everyone in Canada is middle-class. It's the unavoidable national pastime. We'd feel guilty being anything else." Here she is assuming the virtually universal espousal in Canada of values which Tiercel implied as being restricted to his own actual middle-class situation. Later on in the novel, Margrave is angry with Regina for unknowingly undermining his attempt to manipulate voter response by clothing the candidate of his choice, Gratton Fairfield, in the values of middle-class respectability which are summarized as ". . . the All-Canadian product of capitalist virtue with three children and an ideal wife." (p. 265) Fairfield's image had been completely ruined when Regina's brief stint as his mistress came to the attention of Szabo, Fairfield's political opponent. This episode, incidentally, suggests the contrived element of this presumably national attribute, for Fairfield's respectability is clearly the product of a political image-maker's manipulations.

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[10] Frye, "Conclusion to a Literary History of Canada," The Bush Garden (Toronto, 1971), p. 236.

[11] Adrienne Clarkson, Hunger Trace (Toronto, 1970), p. 29.

Another middle-class attribute that writers show some consensus about is the tendency towards moderation in the Canadian national character - a reluctance to go to extremes - which in its worst manifestation regresses to mediocrity. In John Peter's *Take Hands at Winter*, for example, Professor O'Brian, the chief opponent of Andrew Dacre's project to upgrade the calibre of the Department of Music's instrumental division offerings, is described as

> . . . formidable in his insecurity - formidable for his mediocrity too. . . . Exactly the sort of colorless nonentity the Establishment groups in Canada seemed to

> dote on, a man whose innocuousness would always be compliant, reliably safe.[12]

Several pages later, another character, the millionaire owner-manager of the local TV station, is described in terms of his being an exception to this norm of mediocrity - ". . . one member of the Canadian Establishment who was neither timorous or obtuse."(p. 223) It is noteworthy that in both instances there seems to exist an underlying assumption that moderation, or lack thereof, in any Canadian character is the result of conformity to or rejection of the middle-class values presumably possessed by the typical Canadian.

One of the surprising characteristics of these literary portrayals is that moderation is so very rarely depicted as a positive attribute. It would seem natural to expect that in a society like Canada's, in which so many regional, cultural, and ideological polarities seek to coexist, there should be strong social pressure to be compromising, integrative, and tolerant. Yet, almost all portrayals of this professed aspect of the Canadian character are expressed in negative terms.

The self-assessment of the very self-conscious narrator, Wes Wakeham, a young salesman for a Toronto publishing firm in Richard Wright's The Weekend Man, appears at first to be an exception to this rule, but it soon becomes apparent that the "nice guy" self-image conceals intense loneliness and despair. The description terminates in a tone of profound irony:

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[12] John Peter, Take Hands at Winter (Garden City, N.Y., 1967), p. 214.

> . . . by all accounts I'm a likeable fellow. Most people I meet take to me and, without saying as much, let it be known that I am A-Okay. Certainly I am calm and polite and an excellent listener. I make it a point never to give offence or disagree and since I seldom have an opinion on anything I easily avoid arguments, except with my wife. Most of the time I keep unto myself. I have no friends worth speaking of nor do I seek any. I am the fellow boarding house landladies remember as the nice young man who had the back room.[13]

This tone of self-deprecation, which even in its latent desperation is the model of moderation, is later reinforced when Wakeham describes his response to a request that he assess the merits of two rather different schemes for promoting the sale of a new line of slide projectors:

> As usual I praise both schemes but champion neither, preferring to see virtue in both approaches. I sometimes feel that this is what my call in life really is; to stand around with drink in hand, looking pleasant and making people happy by agreeing with them. I have noticed, however, that no one is all that interested in my opinion unless, of course, it happens to agree with theirs, in which case they welcome it with smiles of rare fellowship.(pp. 188-9)

It is not surprising that such feelings of inferiority should ensue from perpetual failure to take a firm stand on issues. These feelings are expressed sufficiently often, especially by the great number of self-analyzing first-person narrators in our recent fiction, to be considered as another supposedly Canadian trait.

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[13] Richard Wright, The Weekend Man (Toronto, 1970), p. 8.

One of the most successful portrayals of this irresolute kind of narrator occurs in a novel I have already referred to briefly - Davies' The Manticore. Most of the novel is occupied with a description of David Staunton's sessions in Jungian psychoanalysis with Dr. Johanna von Haller in Zurich. An eminent criminal lawyer in Toronto, he has journeyed to Zurich, afraid that people in Toronto would conclude that he was a homosexual if they saw him visiting a psychiatrist. He has come to gain some understanding of rather strange aberrations in his behaviour subsequent to his father's apparently suicidal death. Dr. von Haller soon reveals David's propensity to self-consciously project an image of himself as a rich, romantic, eminent but frequently inebriated criminal lawyer in order to disguise his "inferior, suspicious self."(p. 16) She helps him to discover his best self, uncontrived and much less inhibited by self-conscious introspection. The process is difficult, indeed traumatic, for his acquired propensities tend to be "retentive, secretive,"(p. 38) and he is constantly aware of feeling a fool for undergoing psychoanalysis in the first place. During the process of analysis he is constrained to probe deeply into his own background, the result being a greater understanding of his own identity and behaviour. The novel is a very apt demonstration of a process described by Davies several years earlier, whereby nations, like David, by probing their deepest feelings, could come to an awareness of their own individuality:

> It is not by superficial, but by psychological characteristics that modern nations show their individuality, and if Canada can find the way to know itself we shall have a national temperament that the rest of the world will quickly recognize, rooted in feeling - feeling understood, accepted and intelligently directed.[14]

Davies is by no means trying to portray David Staunton as the archetypal Canadian; the author's vision is much larger than that. But it is undeniable that in his lack of confidence, his perpetual self-analysis, his very deliberate formulation of an acceptable public image, David shares traits that are customarily associated with the Canadian stereotype. The fact that he is a product of upper middle-class Establishment Toronto further verifies this relationship.

A first-person narrator with propensities very similar to those of Staunton is to be found in Lucan Crackell of Graeme Gibson's Five Legs. In Staunton's case thought was a substitute for feeling; for Lucan thought is a substitute for action. Both narrators are intensely self-conscious, constantly investigating the attitudes of others towards themselves, and continually agonizing over what their next move will be, and why.

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[14] R. Davies, "The Poetry of a People," in Andy Wainwright, ed., Notes for a Native Land (Ottawa, 1969), p. 98.

The principal event that demonstrates Lucan's tendency to rationalize non-action is his refusal to stop at the scene of an accident while driving a group of his students to the funeral of Martin Baillie, whose thesis Lucan had been supervising at the university. He justifies his refusal to stop at the accident by rationalizing that it is better to drive into town and alert the authorities, and besides, it is dangerous to move an injured person. Later, he castigates himself as a "pompous fraud," which designation of hypocrisy is subsequently verified by his refusal to stop at the police station after his arrival at the next town. He simply doesn't want to get involved. He wants to phone instead, to avoid having to sign papers and answer embarrassing questions.

The very fragmented and tentative style of the narration underlines the extreme hesitancy and lack of confidence of the narrator, reminding one very much of similar stylistic characteristics in Scott Symons' novel. Many sentences are incomplete; Lucan is frequently unable to carry an idea to its logical conclusion. His overwhelming and frequently asserted compulsion to "assert the mind's control"[15] blinds him to the fact that excessive rationalization is merely a excuse for cowardice, a vice that Lucan seems powerless to overcome. The latter part of the novel abandons Lucan in favour of Felix, the man of action, the one who finally took things into his own hands and rescued the injured driver of the overturned car.

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[15] Graeme Gibson, Five Legs (Toronto, 1969), p. 105

I have discussed how the very act of verbalization seems to offer the self-conscious narrators in Symons' Place d'Armes, Davies' The Manticore, and Gibson's Five Legs some remedy for despair, some way of realizing their own dimly-perceived identity. The first-person narrator, Hamidou Diop, in Hubert Aquin's Prochain Episode carries the process one step further by identifying a close relationship between himself, his book, and his country (although in the latter case this country is clearly restricted to Quebec, omitting the rest of Canada). His book, ostensibly written while in detention in Montreal for alleged separatist terrorist activities, is at once an exploration of his own identity and that of his country. At one point he expresses a hope that his book will take on a significance that his country's future and his own life seem to lack.[16] Later in the novel he makes clear that the book, just like him, is a product of a particular place and time - and that they share similar traits:

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[16] Hubert Aquin, Prochain Episode (Toronto, 1967), p. 22.

> This book is meandering and uncertain, so am I; and its true significance cannot be divorced from the date of its composition and the events which occurred in the space of time between my native country and my exile. . . . (p. 69)

And yet, paradoxically, the act of writing is also an escape from reality, as well as a quest for truth. It becomes for the narrator a substitute for both thought and action:

> I write automatically, concentrating on spelling to avoid the compelling logic of homicide. I fool myself with sentences. And this manoeuvre makes my drift so much more pleasant, that I gain words, and lose despair. I stuff the page with enough mental mincemeat to burst all syntax; I rake the naked page with fire, and it's only fair if I write with just one hand in order to think less. (p. 14)

Thus even the French-Canadian writer portrays self-deprecation and uncertainty as important elements in the outlook of what many writers project as the typical Canadian.

For Dougal the School, the narrator in Bernard Epps' Pilgarlic the Death, the act of writing has paradoxical effects similar to those of Aquin's narrator: it is at once a guard against unthinking acceptance of values perpetrated by external manipulators, but it is also a substitute for getting on with the task of living. Throughout the novel Dougal compares himself to his wife Murdena, a fanatical watcher of TV, who lives in a perpetual state of romantic mythic unreality because of her uncritical obsession. She had tricked Dougal into marrying her when in a panicked moment of romantic fantasy she had thought she was pregnant, thus condemning Dougal to life-long wretchedness. He remarks on the soporific effects of TV on Murdena as follows:

> And at this instant I sit writing words on a page while Murdena sits without thought, without hope or desire, absorbed by an alien electronic eye and people whose only occupation is listed as "personality."[17]

He goes on to castigate media manipulators of all kinds:

> We are all manipulated - by Madison Avenue, by Big Daddy Government and its sidekick, Big Business, by newspapers, television, radio, magazines, books - the mass media that were to free us all from ignorance have enslaved us to the Salesmen. Somewhere along the line we stopped being ourselves, or what we were capable of becoming, and became what others wanted us to be. (p. 109)

And yet, just like Lucan in Gibson's novel and Hamidou Diop in _Prochain Episode_, Dougal realizes that writing, because by its very nature it induces thought, can lead to rationalization that inhibits spontaneous living just as effectively as slavery to the TV set. This realization comes to Dougal as he contemplates the life style of the Hermit:

> He doesn't let knowledge come between him and his wisdom as I often do. His actions need no excuse or justification because he needs no words or reasons. He _lives_. I am, therefore I am! His living is _action_ whereas mine is _rationalization_. And his action is a language and perhaps a better one than the language scholars know. At least, more universal. And far more truthful. He is happy. (pp. 102-3)

One perhaps could make a case for this guilt arising from not always being engaged in doing something as being another trait of the Canadian archetype. Suffice it to say, the very act of artistic creation by the first-person narrators in these several recent Canadian novels seems to consistently provide grounds for pessimism and self-deprecation, a state of affairs which is frequently left unresolved.

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[17] Bernard Epps, _Pilgarlic the Death_ (Toronto, 1967), p. 109.

Several conclusions can be drawn from this investigation of recent fictional attempts to portray typically Canadian character traits. First of all, it seems clear that these take no account of the great diversities in our nation. More often than not the elements in the stereotype are contrived to provide a scapegoat for some of the social ills that writers presume exist in our society, although there is a strong suggestion in all the books discussed above that the ills exist as much in the minds of the central characters as they do in the society they so easily despise. Also, there is evidence of a great deal of hesitation in attempting to articulate the elements of national character, which hesitancy is often reflected in a fragmented, uneven, multifaceted style. It is significant how apparently little thought is given to the incorporation of new trends of Canadian self-awareness into the traditional view of the Canadian character. This is apparent from a consideration of how adequately the following summary of the archetypal Canadian by Edward McCourt over twenty years ago describes the stereotype I have been constructing from very recent Canadian fiction:

> The conclusion of most of his acute observers seems to be that the typical Canadian is a thoroughly nice fellow who makes a virtue of moderation; who dislikes the bumptious self-assertiveness of the American though he envies his material success. He is reticent, a little Puritanical perhaps, and decidedly unsure of himself. He takes no great pride in being Canadian; he accepts the fact without regret but is seldom disposed to shout it to the world.[18]

Without doubt the formation of a national stereotype takes place over several decades, indeed generations, but it does seem that such images once formed are surprisingly resistant to changing attitudes and values, partly, of course, because such structures need not necessarily be verifiable factually.

For the balance of this study, therefore, it is my intention to examine some of the social problems and cultural attitudes currently extant in Canada, on the premise that because of this nation's inherent diversity, its identity will emerge more readily as we study how recent literary artists have handled some of the elements of our national experience, rather than by attempting to obscure those diversities by trying to construct a representative Canadian character.

Before proceeding with this discussion, however, I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to the works of Hugh MacLennan, whose vision of the Canadian identity did much to induce the present study. A knowledge of MacLennan's works both fictional and non-fictional is a valuable aid in any investigation of this nation's identity, for in many ways he was the first to try to come to grips on a national level with our particular vision of reality by the fictional exploration of some of our most pressing social problems. This technique of getting at the Canadian identity by an analysis of national problems has obviously inspired my approach in several sections of this study.

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[18] E. McCourt, "Canadian Letters," A Selection of Essays, ed. by Massey Royal Commission, p. 77.

In every one of MacLennan's first five novels, the solution to the particular social issue he had been examining, whether it was Canada's emergence from colonyhood to nationhood in *Barometer Rising* (1941), the relations between French and English-speaking Canadians in *Two Solitudes* (1945), the threat of American domination in *The Precipice* (1948), the debilitating effects of Puritanism in *Each Man's Son* (1951), or the recovery of Canadian confidence after the dark years of the thirties and early forties in *The Watch That Ends the Night* (1959), was always symbolized by the *establishment* of a human relationship. In his latest novel, *Return of the Sphinx* (1967), however, a re-examination of the French Canada problem, MacLennan's attention is focussed upon the *deterioration* of human relationships. Such a reversal of outlook is significant because it is so uncharacteristic. The fact that this novel was published in centennial year, when the national mood unquestionably encouraged optimism, makes MacLennan's tone all the more remarkable.

Since MacLennan has heretofore been a reasonably trustworthy exponent of many aspects of the Canadian consciousness, a more detailed assessment of this last novel will provide some indication of the changes that are taking place in at least one area of our national experience. It will also provide an example of how national identity can be illuminated by studying the fictional analysis of a national social ill. This illustration of my general approach will form the subject matter of the next chapter, and will at the same time provide an appropriate introduction to the first element in our national consciousness that I wish to discuss - the problems caused by the existence in Canada of two official language groups.

IV. The Deterioration of Hope: Return of the Sphinx and Separatism

The remark by Herbert Tarnley, a Montreal business tycoon, that the antipathy between French and English-speaking Canadians is for the first time being expressed, not in theoretical, impersonal terms, but in the form of individualized animosity, establishes a pattern of pessimism that recurs throughout Return of the Sphinx:

> You see, in the past this French-English thing was never personal. In the old days, whenever I came to Montreal, I used to look up one of their politicians whose stock-in-trade was French-Canadian nationalism, but that never made the slightest difference between us. I always considered him a good friend and I knew he felt the same about me. But now it seems different. This time it seems to be personal. I am beginning to think they really hate us now. . . .[1]

The chief focus of study for this process of deterioration in inter-personal relationships is Daniel Ainslie's filial association with his father Alan, a Montreal M.P. who is the federal Minister of Cultural Affairs. Daniel, one of those hybrid products of a marriage between an English-speaking father and a French-speaking mother who are so often pulled in two directions by the impasse of Canadian French-English relations, has opted for the separatist cause. His decision causes his father acute embarrassment, for it undermines the latter's attempts to bring about a political resolution of the difficulties in French Canada by means of rational discussion and negotiation.

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[1] Hugh MacLennan, Return of the Sphinx (Toronto, 1967), p. 9.

Daniel's espousal of separatism requires a contrived rejection of his English heritage, a dismissal that makes his complaints about Anglo-Canadian treatment of the French sound insincere and ridiculous. For example, when asked by his matronly lover Marielle to explain what it means to be a French Canadian, Daniel replies, "It's hell. It's plain hell. We suffer and we don't know why."(p. 148) Most of Daniel's suffering exists in his imagination only. The comfortable middle-class life-style provided by his Anglo father - a luxurious apartment in Montreal, a secluded cottage in the Laurentians, ownership of a sports car - provide him with a mode of existence that is anything but deprived. Equally unconvincing, and for the same reason, is a remark Daniel makes to his father about the French-speaking inhabitants of Quebec:

> . . . we're orphans and at last we've found the courage to admit it. We don't want to spend the rest of our lives in an orphanage - and that's all the Province of Quebec will ever be unless it becomes an independent state and regains the pride that was milked and crushed out of it.(p. 243)

The deterioration of the relationship between Daniel and his father is portrayed with a good deal of sensitivity. There is evidence to suggest that Daniel somewhat naively thinks that his involvement in separatism need offer no threat to this relationship. He even rationalizes at one point that the recognition of the way "this rotten country" has treated his father is one of the factors that has contributed to his own antipathy towards the English.(pp. 145-6) He turns down the proposal of the intellectual revolutionary, Latendresse, that the latter and Daniel's father publicly debate the issues of separatism on Daniel's T.V. program; Daniel mutters something about wanting to keep his father out of it.

He reverses this position during a subsequent emotionally-charged conversation with his father when he proposes that Alan turn his back on "their damned System" and join them.(p. 241) Not surprisingly, Alan is incredulous. This conversation starts out in a low but intense key, with restraint and embarrassment being felt on both sides - Daniel not wanting to insult his father, and Alan trying his hardest to avoid sounding stuffy to his son, "as though he were a student or some half-stranger he was doing official business with."(p. 241) This mutual self-conscious suppression of their real feelings eventually collapses, however, with Alan making impassioned demands for his son's respect and Daniel furiously dismissing his father as a thoughtless lackey of the Establishment. Any chance of reconciliation is virtually eliminated when Alan's parliamentary superior, Bulstrode, has Daniel's T.V. show cancelled because of its inflammatory content. Almost incoherent with rage, Daniel telephones his father and calls him a fink, then slams down the receiver in the midst of Alan's explanation.

This breakdown of a human relationship is indicative of MacLennan's acute pessimism about there being any resolution to the impasse in French Canada, signalling a marked change of outlook in MacLennan's delineation of the Canadian social landscape. This cynicism is also reflected in the multiplicity of narrative viewpoints present in the novel. In earlier works of fiction usually only one but at the most two amazingly coherent and articulate central consciousnesses were employed to convey MacLennan's assessment of the issues under investigation. In this novel, however, there are a number of characters who at various times seem to be expressing MacLennan's conception of the problem of French-English relationships, but these figures display flaws in judgment unusual in the kind of character MacLennan usually develops to fulfil this function, thereby throwing doubt on the reliability of their assessments. In my opinion this is a refreshing change, for we are not as conscious of the often intrusive guiding authorial intellect that stalks the pages of some of MacLennan's earlier works. We are also able to gain greater insight into the many different facets of the French Canada dilemma by being exposed to so many viewpoints. In the context of MacLennan's entire fictional canon to date, however, this lack of certainty about the nature of the problem he is examining, much less the failure to articulate a solution, at least on the personal level, is significant.

The most promising potential spokesman for the author is the protagonist, Alan Ainslie, the grown-up and M.P.'d version of the orphaned Alan MacNeil in MacLennan's earlier novel, Each Man's Son.[2] Ainslie soon acquires so many marks against him, however, that his dependability as a central consciousness is severely assailed. He doesn't appear until more than sixty pages of the novel have elapsed, and in the meantime we learn from his businessman acquaintance, Herbert Tarnley, that he is naive,(p. 17) from his daughter Chantal that part of him never grew up,(p. 42) and from a number of Alan's friends, via Chantal, that he was always a poor judge of character.(p. 43) There is a good deal of ensuing evidence that most of these judgments are not inaccurate.

Alan's most apparent trait is his idealism, for he clearly thinks that a solution to the impasse in French-English relations can be achieved by appealing to the reasoning capabilities of his fellow legislators and, indeed, his own son. This idealism proves to be his undoing, and eventually results in his withdrawal from politics, for he discovers that his fellow politicians are unwilling to rise above party or narrow regional allegiances to save the country from disintegration, and that his appeal on the basis of principle to Moses Bulstrode, the stalwart Ontario M.P. second only to the Prime Minister, cannot overcome Bulstrode's Anglo-Canadian myopia.

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[2] Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1951.

Another imperfect centre of consciousness for the communication of MacLennan's ideas is Gabriel Fleury, Alan's wartime flying companion. On the surface, Gabriel would seem to have the qualifications for a credible choral character. Like so many of MacLennan's mouthpieces, he has the breadth of experience necessary to give him a balanced perspective of the events he is called upon to evaluate. As a matter of fact, the author unfortunately goes overboard in establishing his qualifications as a trustworthy spokesman. Not only are we informed of his European French background, but the excruciating experiences of his childhood are described in unnecessary detail. There are extraneous accounts of his experience with an English colonel while being shipwrecked in the Malacca Strait and of his return to his birthplace of Dauphine, France, to make sure we don't miss the point - that he has a sufficient breadth of experience to qualify his as a judge of the events that are taking place in the country of his adoption.

In spite of these apparent abilities, however, Gabriel proves to be curiously inarticulate. In the first chapter of the novel, Herbert Tarnley repeatedly asks Gabriel to shed some light on the current turmoil among French-speaking

Quebecers. About the best he can obtain from his companion is bland alibis such as "Maybe I could answer you if I knew what real hatred is,"(p. 9) "Not only do I not know, but I don't know anyone who does,"(p. 11) and "Mr. Tarnley, do you really expect things to make sense?"(p. 11) The latter is a surprisingly patronizing remark to a powerful businessman whose questions and observations demonstrate a good deal of insight into the underlying causes of the Quebec malaise. When Tarnley does demonstrate such insight, as shown, for example, in his comments on the similarities between the Church and big business,(p. 16) Gabriel continues to hold his peace. His only response is to think to himself that Tarnley certainly has earned his unusual eyes, although whether those items in his physical makeup were dark, or penetrating, or perceptive, or sinister, and what they have to do with Tarnley's understanding of the situation anyhow, we are never permitted to discover.

A further complication in MacLennan's portrayal of Gabriel is produced by the rather perplexing comment made by Joe Lacombe, a French-Canadian R.C.M.P. officer, to their mutual friend, Alan Ainslie. Joe observes, "That Frenchman [Gabriel] worries too much. He makes a science of it. No matter what it is about something, you talk to old Gabriel for five minutes and it's so complicated you don't know where you are."(p. 89) On the contrary, Gabriel's analyses seem remarkably destitute of complication. It could perhaps be argued that MacLennan is trying to emphasize the seriousness of the impasse, when even a person of Gabriel's ability and experience is unable to come up with any satisfactory insights into the underlying causes of the separatist agitation, much less the solution to the dilemma. But if this is the case, MacLennan has spent an inordinate amount of time in establishing Gabriel as a trustworthy central consciousness to have him fail so utterly to live up to those expectations.

Marielle Jeannotte is another European outsider whose experiences of terrorist violence in Morocco qualify her as MacLennan's mouthpiece for exposing the untenable position Daniel Ainslie has adopted on behalf of the separatist cause. Her flaws are particularly evident when she tries to initiate Daniel into not only the harsh realities of life, but also some of its sensual pleasures, for she develops an inexplicably strong passion for a young man whose sexual inexperience and moral insensitivity would not seem to qualify him as an unduly attractive companion. Furthermore, her consent to spend the night with Daniel at his father's apartment, where they are discovered by Alan, seems not only unduly indiscrete but inadequately motivated, and consequently lowers the reader's estimation of her judgment.

She does, however, make some very perceptive remarks to Daniel concerning his involvement in the separatist movement. She identifies his tendency to romanticize violence with the comment, "All this sounds so exciting, so very intelligent, so dramatic when it's at the talking stage. But don't you understand where that kind of talk leads? . . . This movement of yours will lead directly to bombs and shootings in the streets."(p. 157) Her European background and experience also enable her to cast aspersion on the ostensible uniqueness of the movement when she asserts, "You people in this movement of yours - you have no idea how provincial you sound. You talk as though Quebec were the centre of the universe. You talk as though nobody ever had feelings like yours before."(p. 156)

The two representatives of the separatist movement, Aimé Latendresse and Daniel Ainslie, receive rather short shrift in this novel, indicating that no matter how legitimate the complaints of the French Canadians are, MacLennan rejects revolutionary violence as a solution. Latendresse's stance is that of the typical radical - arrogant, calculating, contemptuous of the English, even those who would attempt to understand the French, prepared to engender bloodshed in order to achieve his goals. During his interview on Daniel's T.V. program he answers questions ". . . in a voice so cold and emotionless that it might have come out of an ice box."(p. 128) His prime appeal is to the inferiority feelings of his French-Canadian compatriots. MacLennan portrays him as a disillusioned priest whose main motivation is clearly a hunger for power. He informs Daniel that he can hardly wait for the time when ". . . we no longer have to persuade but can give orders and people will spring up from all sides to obey them."(p. 134) A few pages later the author assigns a similar fault to Daniel:

> Daniel was intoxicated with the feeling of power and wonder at himself that comes to a very young man who has succeeded suddenly and beyond expectation and believes he is becoming famous.(pp. 137-8)

The strongest reason for rejecting Daniel as a convincing representative of the separatist movement - and, indeed, as a credible character - arises from his failure to take advantage of the several opportunities afforded him during the novel to gain added insight into both himself and others. He comes to the brink of such insights with Marielle, with Latendresse, whom he recognized as having no feelings - "not even . . . an ordinary consciousness of his existence,"(p. 233) with his father, who he learned was an orphan in a much deeper sense than he himself was, and finally, when he recognized his fraternity with the Irish nationalist anarchists and with "that brutalized apparition"(p. 258) of his grandfather, the boxer Archie MacNeil, during his reading of old newspapers. He comes so frequently to the brink of self-awareness, and withdraws just as frequently to a position more unmovable than before, that he finally forfeits all possibility of engaging reader sympathy. Only by the deus ex machina intervention of Joe Lacombe is he prevented from blowing himself up at the end of the novel.

The inequities that have given rise to the separatist movement, on the other hand, MacLennan outlines with a great deal of sympathy and understanding. The delineation of these grievances is particularly compelling because they are articulated not only by people like Daniel or Latendresse but by characters like Alan Ainslie or Gabriel Fleury, whose integrity and moral judgment cannot be impugned. Alan's argument for encouraging bilingualism in the public service, for example, is most convincing. He is presenting his case to Bulstrode:

> If we insist on bilingualism on the recruitment level of the federal civil service, it will be taken as a touchstone in Quebec and everywhere else that we accept that Canada is the home of two cultures and that the majority wishes the minority culture to survive and prosper. If this happens, we will have one of the happiest and most stable nations in the world. It's that, or disintegration. If we give French Canada another run-around at this particular moment, bombs will soon be going off. (p. 214)

Gabriel Fleury also contributes to the credibility of the French-Canadian side of the impasse, although as I have pointed out, his insights are disappointingly few and far between in the light of his apparent capacity for trustworthy judgement. The following plea addressed to Daniel, which recognizes the legitimacy of French-Canadian grievances and yet rejects separation by violence, is the model of moderation:

> It would break my heart if Quebec separates. If Canada can hold together, she could become a pilot plant for a

> new kind of nation and a new kind of freedom and I'm not exaggerating the importance of that for the whole world. If two old cultures like the French and English can't work together within a single national home without destroying each other, what chance have all the others got in what has practically become a single world society? Well, perhaps Quebec will separate. But if she does, let it be done decently. Let it be done without hatred and murder and all this paranoia of you and your friends. (pp. 263-4)

It is significant that both Alan and Gabriel imply that resolution of the difficulties in French Canada would be of not only national but world-wide consequence - that Canada's handling of this problem will be the microcosmic crucible in which the potential for global peace is tested.

It is the views of Joe Lacombe that are the most convincing. He is the French-Canadian R.C.M.P. officer who informs his friend Alan Ainslie that his son Daniel is under surveillance for suspected terrorist activities. Lacombe is, in my estimation, the most colourful and convincing character in the novel. Shockingly irreverent, he is not perpetually on the verge of spouting thinly disguised versions of MacLennan rhetoric as so many of the narrative centres of consciousness in this and other MacLennan novels tend to do.

Lacombe's main claim to serious attention becomes evident in a statement he makes during his first conversation with Alan. He asserts that he is willing for Quebec to stay in Confederation, provided that the English prove amenable to sharing Canada with their French compatriots:

> We want a patrie, and for the most of us [separatism is clearly a minority phenomenon for MacLennan] Canada will do fine if the rest of you will ever get around to letting it become a patrie for all of us and not just for les Anglais. (p. 106)

As Robert Cockburn perceptively observes, Lacombe seems to symbolize ". . . the sort of Quebec MacLennan - and most Canadians - would be comfortable with: a Quebec that retains its individuality and pride but which also regards itself as a responsible and integral part of a nation greater than itself."[3]

Because of this compelling portrayal, the observations on the French-Canadian malaise that Joe considers basic to an understanding of the separatist movement smack immediately of legitimacy. He summarily eliminates many of the stock English Canada explanations for separatism - that its motives are materialistic, that the Roman Catholic Church is behind it,[4] that it has been started by outside influences rather than arising from abuses that go back to the time of the conquering of the French by the English, and so on. Some of the best writing in the book occurs when Lacombe describes the way things have changed in Quebec.

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[3] Robert H. Cockburn, The Novels of Hugh MacLennan (Montreal, 1969), p. 135.

[4] Gabriel Fleury made a similar point when he asserted, in response to Tarnley's suggestion that the Church had taught the French from the cradle onwards to be suspicious of the English, that three-quarters of the participants in a particular separatist-induced riot under discussion didn't care a damn what the Church taught about anything. (p. 12)

(pp.104ff.) The narrative is vivid and convincing because it is wittily-expressed conversation screened through the vital personality of Lacombe, and it is communicated in terms of the imagined psyches of a French-Canadian boy or girl rather than in a lengthy rhetorical disquisition.

Despite the several flaws I have outlined, Return of the Sphinx, because of its delineation of so many shades of opinion regarding the French Canada dilemma by exponents both hostile and amicable to the issue of Quebec separatism, unquestionably presents the fullest treatment of this complicated issue among all the novels that were written during the period under consideration in this study.

What is particularly notable about MacLennan's novel, however, is his loss of certainty as to the resolution of this particular Canadian problem. It could very possibly reflect the insecurities present during a period when the rate of change in Canadians' conception of themselves is accelerating, when old certainties are being disrupted and new relationships established. In spite of changes, however, national identity persists; indeed, threats to a nation's status quo often advance the elements of its identity to the forefront of national consciousness. The balance of this study will be devoted to a consideration of some of the chief elements in Canadians' awareness of themselves as recent fiction writers have portrayed them.

PART II - THE NOT SO PEACEABLE KINGDOM AND CANADIAN IDENTITY

V. Identity as Racial Impasse: The French Canada Predicament

There is no myth about Canada published more widely and proclaimed more resolutely by proponents of the Canadian nation than her legendary reputation as a modern land of promise in which men can finally overlook racial and idealistic differences and co-exist in an atmosphere of peace, hope, and goodwill. William Kilbourn, recalling Northrop Frye's comment that a painting depicting a treaty between Indians and Quakers and entitled "The Peaceable Kingdom" could well symbolize a central quest in the Canadian literary tradition,[1] perpetuates this myth by subtitling his recent collection of essays about Canada _A Guide to the Peaceable Kingdom_.

Such an image is pleasant and doubtless contains an element of truth. There is no question that many characteristics of the Canadian situation do inspire optimism - the wide open spaces, the rich natural resources, the numerous opportunities for material success, the wonted tolerance of difference. If human beings cannot learn to live together peaceably here, it is very unlikely they can do so anywhere.

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[1] William Kilbourn, "Introduction," in his _Canada: A Guide to the Peaceable Kingdom_ (Toronto, 1970), p. xvii.

But Canada is not yet Utopia. Undue enthusiasm about this country's opportunities can blind the exponent to her deficiencies. In the next three chapters I propose to discuss several recent fictional examinations of some imperfections in the image of Canada as the peaceable kingdom, all of which can be described as incompatibilities arising from racial differences. Artistic portrayals of French Canadians, Indians and Eskimos, and immigrants will be shown to controvert in many ways the portrayal of Canada as the land of reconciliation and promise - as, indeed, the peaceable kingdom. To the extent that a country can be known by the particular problems it faces, this discussion will reveal several components of the Canadian identity.

By far the most critical threat to Canada's claim to be the peaceable kingdom proceeds from the long-standing state of unrest in French Canada. It is a well-documented fact that many French-Canadians, having despaired of ever achieving any satisfactory resolution of their differences with their English Canadian compatriots, have opted for eventual political secession of the province of Quebec from the rest of Canada by means peaceful or violent, in order that a viable context for the realization of their aspirations might be provided.

Recent fictional examinations of this impasse between Canada's two founding races (whose forefathers had hoped that tolerant co-habitation under the aegis of a single federal state would compose one of the central elements of this nation's identity) have tended to reflect one of two approaches. Some writers endeavour to convey the reasons for the present impasse, showing that misunderstanding between the two racial groups arises largely as a result of mutual ignorance and distrust. Dave Godfrey's "River Two Blind Jacks," Roch Carrier's _La Guerre, Yes Sir!_ and Ronald Sutherland's _Lark des Neiges_ take this approach. Other writers direct their attention to the potential outcome of this predicament in French Canada and prophesy one of two consequences. On the optimistic side have been those bold enough to show that a resolution of this dilemma is feasible on the personal level, in spite of the fact that termination of the impasse by corporate negotiated compromise seems impossible. James Bacque's _Big Lonely_ examines the viability of such a solution. Other writers, in a much more pessimistic vein, project an eventual bloody altercation between the opposing forces, although their aim could very well be to shock their readers into a painful awareness of potential consequences if a negotiated settlement of differences cannot be achieved. Ellis Portal's _Killing Ground_ is one example of this highly unpleasant outcome of the current impasse in French Canada.

The Predicament Analyzed: Godfrey, Carrier and Sutherland

A very fascinating examination of the French Canada dilemma is to be found in Dave Godfrey's parable-like short story, "River Two Blind Jacks." The first-person narrator immediately dispels any inclination on the part of the reader to expect a realistic treatment of the situation his grandfather had repeatedly described when he insists that he wasn't sure if the story was true or not, for "truth and fancy ran like two tributaries from the river of his [the grandfather's] memory."[2] This allegorical level is reinforced by the description of the grandfather's apparel: he wore beaded Blackfoot moccasins; navy-blue, holey, Mountie breeches; a Cree deerhide jacket over a flannel shirt; and a black English bowler hat supposedly given to him by Queen Victoria (p. 302) - all symbolic of various branches of Canadian historical experience.

In this story the opposing sides in the French Canada predicament are portrayed as two feuding logging camps. Every year each camp selects a champion to represent them in a test of ingenuity and hardihood - that of trying to eliminate the opponent while engaged in an eight-day battle for survival in the wilderness, far removed from the two camps. The prize for the camp of the winner was the opportunity to be the first to use the Minassi River after break-up, which the grandfather narrator contemptuously dismisses as being "as useless as my breeches."(p. 303)

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[2] Dave Godfrey, "River Two Blind Jacks," in Robert Weaver, ed., Canadian Short Stories (Toronto, 1968), p. 301.

As a result of a series of unfortunate circumstances, the two champions, Reginald Couteau and Albert Goodspeed, find themselves accidentally imprisoned in two separate bearpits, facing the prospect of imminent death. When each realizes that neither of them is likely to survive the ordeal, their taunts change to a discussion of their dilemma and the feud that has given rise to it, which ultimately produces an admission of guilt and responsibility by each. Unfortunately, it is too late for either champion to aid the other, and both shortly thereafter are killed by a rampaging grizzly.

There are a number of particulars about the feud that give significant insight into Godfrey's conception of the French Canada dilemma. First of all, the grandfather observed that "One camp was Frenchies and the other weren't. . . .(p. 303) - a reminder that the French are arrayed against the rest of Canada, only a part of whom are strictly of English origin. A couple of paragraphs later the grandfather describes this "non-French" camp more specifically as ". . . that unchristian mongrel of folk what made up the other camp - some Dutch, a few Germans, the odd Yankee who had broken away from the apron string of his stars and eagles, but mostly English, and mostly the second-son kind of English. . . ."(p. 304)

We learn also that nobody knew how the feud had begun - probably a friendly log-rolling contest that had degenerated into a holy war. While Godfrey implies here that the conflict contains a religious dimension, he very neatly side-steps the necessity of stating more specifically the reasons for it. He seems to be suggesting that the reasons are no longer important.

Another significant detail rather neatly conveys the French-Canadian claim to being the original settlers of Canada: namely, the accusation that Couteau levels at Godspeed that whereas Reginald's grandfathers had been born in Canada, Albert was a "newcomer" and a "ladyfoot" whose forefathers had been born "on the wrong side of the ocean." (p. 304)

The mutual recognition of the drastic consequences of their enmity - the realization that they will survive only if they help one another - moves them to drop their stances of hostility. Godspeed says, "You know, Frenchie, this whole damn war is rather absurd. You ever hear who started it?" Couteau replies, "No, but I think it must have been a Frenchie" - an astoundingly honest admission of responsibility. This concession is immediately reciprocated by Godspeed: "Not on your life. Must have been a bullheaded Englishman."(p. 313) The fact that this reconciliation comes too late gives this story a rather more serious didactic purpose than would seem to be indicated by its otherwise jocular tone.

Another very balanced portrayal of how mutual ignorance of the other race leads to mistrust and animosity is to be found in Roch Carrier's La Guerre, Yes Sir! As the title suggests, the novel focusses on one of the issues that perhaps more than anything else has created division between the two races: the wide-spread French-Canadian refusal to go to war on Britain's behalf. The action revolves around the arrival in a small Quebec village of seven English-speaking Canadian soldiers with the very fragmented remains of Corriveau, a local conscript who had stepped on a German mine. The ensuing events constitute at once a satire on French-English relationships and on the tragic futility of war.

The portrayal of neither the English-Canadian soldiers nor the French-Canadian villagers is particularly complimentary. None of the former are individualized by being given a name, and the sergeant is distinguished from the rest primarily by virtue of his role as leader of the funeral cortege. Even a soldier who is accidentally killed by a beserk villager is given no individuality. The whole method of presentation illustrates my contention that the racial impasse is maintained as long as each group member thinks of the other race as a group, not as individuals. This propensity to see the members of the other race in collective terms is illustrated in the Corriveau parents' response to the English intruders:

> The Anglais ate little. They spoke little. They drank little. If one of the Anglais spoke, the others were quiet and listened. If a question were asked one at a time would answer. They didn't laugh: instead, they compressed their lips in a miserly smile. . . . They had the impression that the Anglais were making fun of them when they spoke.[3]

The French-Canadian villagers are presented in a much more individualized fashion for the most part, but the narrator has a shrewd tendency to adopt at times the impersonal mode of description that characterizes the soldiers' hostile response to the French Canadians as a group. It is difficult to tell whether the following assessment expresses the view of the soldiers, the narrator, or both:

> What kind of animals were these French Canadians? They had the manners of pigs in a pigpen. Besides, if you looked at them carefully, objectively, French Canadians really looked like pigs too. The long thin Anglais looked at the French Canadians' double chins, their swollen bellies, the big flaccid breasts of their women; they scrutinized the French Canadians' eyes, floating inertly in the white fat of their faces - they were real pigs, these French Canadians, whose civilization consisted of drinking, eating, farting, belching. The soldiers had known for a long time that French Canadians were pigs. "Give them something to eat and a place to shit and we'll have peace in the country," they used to say. That night the soldiers had proof before their eyes that the French Canadians were pigs. (p. 81)

Here the narrator appears to be guilty of the same biases that the English soldiers so clearly possess. Moreover, the reported actions of the French Canadians seem to bear out the rather unpleasant summary quoted above. Carrier chooses not to resolve this ambiguity, leaving the reader to judge whether the soldiers' reactions to the French are perceptive or prejudiced.

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[3] Roch Carrier, La Guerre, Yes Sir! (Toronto, 1970), p. 92.

Both religious and educational institutions are implicitly censured for contributing to the misconceptions each racial group has both about themselves and about the other group. Bérubé, a lowly private employed as a cleaner of latrines at Gander, Newfoundland, who returns to his small town Quebec home the same time as Corriveau's coffin, is unable to perform with a Newfoundland prostitute because of guilt associations between sex and hell instilled in him by his priest. In a fit of moral discomfiture he proposes to the prostitute, who without a second thought accepts. The French-Canadian priest, happy that the letter of the law is being fulfilled, waives any investigation of more practical concerns such as the incompatibility of their language and cultural backgrounds or Bérubé's incapability of supporting Molly, and does not hesitate to give them his blessing. (p. 32) His sin of omission soon becomes painfully apparent - literally so to Molly - who shortly after the wedding becomes the victim of frequent Bérubé beatings. The incompetence and biased instruction of the Church is also apparent in old Corriveau's response to seeing Molly praying with the other villagers for his son's soul:

> The God of the English and the God of the French Canadians couldn't be the same one; that isn't possible. The English protestants are damned, so there couldn't be a God for the damned in hell. She isn't praying at all; she's only pretending. (p. 44)

The English Canadian school system is responsible for instilling in the soldiers ideas about French-Canadian inferiority. They had been taught that "French Canadians were solitary, fearful, barely intelligent; they didn't have a talent for government or business or agriculture, but they made lots of babies."(p. 82) They were also told that their French-speaking compatriots had hidden in the woods, refusing to accept the "civilizing benefits" the English offered them, including the opportunity to speak a more cultured language rather than their wretched patois.

Much of the French Canadians' resentment of the English arises from the subservient role the members of their race are presumed to play in the war effort. Arthur, a French-Canadian draft-dodger, sees Canadians, Britains and Germans as the "big guys" who got the "little guys" to fight their wars for them, the "little guys" being the French Canadians. (p. 8) When the soldiers fail to shut the door of the train station, the station master remarks, "You can see these maudits Anglais are used to having niggers or French Canadians to shut their doors. That's what Corriveau must have done: open and shut doors for the Anglais."(p. 22) The resentment reaches a climax in the picture the villagers create after the soldiers evict them from the Corriveau house for making too much noise:

> . . . Corriveau had been killed in the mud of the old country while the Anglais were sitting on cushions in their offices; the Anglais left their shelters sometimes, but only to go and bring a young French Canadian, dead in the war, back to his family. . . . (p. 90)

Once again, the narrator ambiguously evades proving these assessments inaccurate.

There is very little relief in Carrier's novel from the essentially critical treatment that both English and French Canadians receive. There is no evidence of resolution of misunderstanding being achieved, even on the personal level. The best opportunity for this - the marriage of Molly and Bérubé - is the very antithesis of racial reconciliation. In my opinion there are only two occasions on which the reader's sympathy is aroused because of this impasse. One occurs when the Corriveaus finally lapse into a numb acceptance of the tragedy of their son's death, for "An entire life-time had taught them that they could do nothing."(p. 41) I think one's pity is also aroused by Berube's dilemma, when it becomes apparent that he is an outsider in both groups - among the other soldiers, because he is a French Canadian, and among the villagers, not only because he had sold out to the English by becoming a soldier, but because he had cleaned up on Arsène, one of their number, for laughing at the war, and later had joined the other soldiers in ousting them all from the Corriveau house. (p. 99) He is a victim, caught between the upper and nether stones of these two opposing forces.*

It is difficult to see anything particularly Canadian in the nature of the prejudice so evidently displayed in these works by Godfrey and Carrier. One could perhaps speculate as to what extent the vastness of Canada contributes to the perpetuation of the kind of French-Canadian enclave as the small town in Carrier's novel, where no contact between the two races has ever taken place before. Both authors make clear that each race looks upon the other as an interloper in Canada. The French-Canadian villagers assume that their English compatriots come from England, not Canada. Equally uninformed are the English soldiers in Carrier's novel, who indicate that in their view the French Canadians are pesky remnants of a subdued race whose most evident un-Canadian posture is their failure to learn English.

But the French Canada impasse sheds light on the Canadian identity because of its paramount position in the Canadian consciousness. No Canadian can be unaware that this impasse prevents a group of people who have willed to live in this country and thus be somehow unique from truly living _together_. No Canadian can be unaware how seriously the perpetuation of this problem undermines the image of Canada as the peaceable kingdom. Because our _ideal_ identity is threatened by the unpleasant reality of the French Canada perplexity, our _true_ identity is thereby paradoxically affirmed.

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* Another excellent example of such a victim is to be found in Hugh Hood's short story, "Bicultural Angela," in Around the Mountain: Scenes from Montreal Life (Toronto, 1967). The story examines the consequences of a young English girl's failure to recognize that whereas the two solitudes may learn, in the famous words of Rilke, to touch and greet each other, they may never *become* each other.

In _Lark des Neiges_ Ronald Sutherland provides several similarly astute insights into the underlying reasons for the strained relations between French and English Canadians. The first-person narrator, Madame Suzanne Laflamme, is well-qualified to assess both sides objectively because her father was English and mother French. First-hand experience of the impasse had been further extended as the result of her former relationship with a bigoted English-speaking tough by the name of Nick Wheeler, who demonstrated some of the worst characteristics of anti-French Canadian prejudice. His hostility towards the "pepsis," as he called them, was based primarily on his thoughtless assumption that they had all hidden out during the war.

Like Carrier, Sutherland places part of the blame for the French Canada predicament on religious, educational, and parental authority figures. The religious basis of the impasse is reflected in the behaviour of both a Roman Catholic priest and a Presbyterian clergyman, both of whom become subjects for the author's ironic censure. When Suzy had confessed on one occasion an act of fornication with a Presbyterian boy, the priest had been more disturbed by the religious affiliation of the lad than with the iniquitous nature of the deed itself. He says not a word about the latter, but instead urges her to ". . . seek companionship only among those of good, avowed Christian character."[5]

Such amplification of minor distinctions into major issues is a fault of the local Presbyterian minister as well. At the funeral for Suzy's Aunt Kate, attended by more Roman Catholics than Presbyterians, the minister almost dropped dead, Suzy tells us, when the former all genuflected, for they "Don't go for that kind of stuff in the Presbyterian Church, you know."(p. 12) His ignorance becomes even more painfully apparent when he assumes that cards on the consolatory flowers have been written in Gaelic until someone points out to him that the language is French.

Because the racial conflict between the French and the English is so frequently expressed in religious terms, those on each side who don't wear both caps are construed to be misfits. Suzy remarks:

> In this province it's pretty hard lines on the French Protestants and English Catholics - they never know where they are, and everybody thinks of them as freaks

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[5] Ronald Sutherland, Lark des Neiges (Toronto, 1971), p. 11.

> of some sort. We had always been warned against the Irish Catholics at the French school. (p. 74)

Thus the schools as well as the churches share Sutherland's censure for perpetuating prejudicial animosities in the young. Suzy, having been exposed to French school until age fifteen, then two years in a convent, and then one year at an English high school, expresses her exasperation on this point as follows:

> Listening to one set of teachers tell me how ruthless and money-hungry the English are, and another set of teachers explain how backward and cowardly the French are. Les maudzits blokes and the yellow-bellied pepsis! Fraternité! Brotherhood! Shit la marde! (p. 57)

The third group of authority figures that receives Suzy's blame for perpetuating the impasse in the relations between French and English-speaking Canadians is parents, who so effectively instil their own prejudices in their children. Suzy lays the blame for the disruption of the Corpus Christi parade by a group of English ruffians upon the parents, who have filled the children's minds with hate. (p. 98) Her own French-Canadian mother contributed to Suzy's inferiority complex by telling her that the English and the Jews were smarter than French Canadians. (p. 77) Her English-Canadian father, Andrew MacDonald, demonstrating the tendency to over-generalize that so often underlies prejudice, had decided that the whole trouble with French Canadians was that they didn't use proper logic, a consequence of being short-changed as far as adequate training in mathematics was concerned. So he attempted to make up the deficiency by hiring an English-speaking tutor to drill Suzy in math. Unfortunately, at least as far as MacDonald was concerned, the tutor went beyond the call of duty by introducing her to sex as well.

MacDonald's ethnocentrism becomes particularly apparent in an episode where he is attempting to counter his wife's accusation that French Canadians don't receive as much opportunity for advancement as their English Canadian counterparts:

> Yvette, when a French Canadian is qualified for promotion - and mind you, it doesn't happen very often - then he gets a promotion, just the same as everybody else. He has to speak good English, but that's perfectly normal. (p. 102)

A further effect of this limited conception of normality is that Suzy's father never makes any overt effort to learn or speak French. As Suzy explains, "My father was too stupid to learn French - either too stupid or too stubborn. Of course, he didn't have to, did he? Why should anyone bother to learn a language if he doesn't have to?" (p. 56)

A confusion of identity had ensued for Suzy as the progeny of such a mixed marriage, as it had for Suzy's mother, who had also had an English father and a French mother. Suzy complains that they both were never exactly certain which side to be on, particularly when one race was looking for a scapegoat on which to deposit the current ills of society:

> The English blamed the whole French-Canadian population for the zoct-suiters and the draft dodgers. It was an awful mess, Minnie [the cat who acts as Suzy's captive audience of one for most of the book]. Each side was convinced it was right and hated the other side. But I was in a worse mess than any of them - I could never figure out who I was supposed to hate. Maman was in the same boat. Between her own family and my father and his family, she didn't know which way to turn. (p. 100)

In Sutherland's view then, the impasse in relations between French and English-speaking Canadians is due primarily to the installation of a pejorative stereotype of the other race in the minds of children by religious, educational, and parental authority figures. As in most cases of racial prejudice, these images are perpetuated by ignorance and lack of personal contact - completely understandable in a country whose very dimensions make possible the persistence of such polarities. It is interesting that the language barrier is not portrayed as the key deterrent to the amelioration of this situation. Very simply, the problem arises from the tendency to think of people in groups, and thus to impose group expectations upon individual behaviour.

Resolution or Revolution: Bacque and Portal

Most recent Canadian writers who investigate the impasse in relations between the two main cultures of this country assume that the situation cannot remain static for long - that it will either be resolved by members of each group learning to get along with one another as individuals, or lead to the violent withdrawal of the province of Quebec from Confederation. Big Lonely by James Bacque, like MacLennan's Return of the Sphinx, shows how espousal of the separatist cause, particularly when the means of separation is presumed to require violence, necessarily threatens not only personal inter-racial affinities, but all normal human relationships.

In Bacque's novel, André Riancourt, a talented Montreal painter, returns to Canada from England and France in order to aid the cause of Quebec separatism. His English Canadian friend, Harry Summers, also returns to Canada seeking the companionship of his old friend to heal the effects of sudden disillusionment with London, but his arrival at André's secluded Laurentian retreat soon reveals that a marked change has occurred in their relationship. Harry, while greeted warmly by André's girlfriend Janine, is perplexed not only by André's reserve, but by the presence of a separatist by the name of Langevin who at first threatens him with a rifle.

Trust between the two friends is restored shortly thereafter, however, when André makes no move to stop Harry from lining up the departing Langevin in the sights of the rifle that had been carelessly left standing against the wall of the cabin. As Harry remarks, if André had really believed in the separatist cause, his automatic distrust of all things English would never have allowed him to leave the rifle in such an opportune position. This proves to him that André instinctively trusts their friendship more than his fears of Anglo nationalism; as Harry tells him, ". . . you are just like me au fond, people, your personal relations, your friends matter more to you than art, politics, the revolution, death."[6]

Shortly thereafter Harry unaccountably agrees to collaborate with André in his separatist activities, living with him at his "studio," where by means of a stolen printing press André will grind out separatist propaganda, and consenting to participate in a plan to commandeer temporarily a local radio station in order to broadcast a separatist message and thereby harass the English. The obligations of friendship provide a somewhat inadequate motivation for this participation in terrorism on Harry's part; there is little wonder then that he is constantly plagued by self-doubts because of his involvement. His earlier rationalization that "to think as an Anglo is to believe in the French in this country"(p. 39) sounds rather hollow.

Perhaps what Bacque is implying is that while being Anglo or French is not a matter of choice, being Canadian is. Therefore, since the Canadian nation is threatened by the French Canada dilemma, Harry's individual identity as a Canadian is similarly threatened, resulting in that identity being intensified. Harry's reasoning becomes less beclouded, however, when he recognizes that both he and André are fighting not against Anglo-Canadianism per se, but against middle-class intolerance of anything that would challenge the mediocrity of the status quo, expressed in the attitude ". . . so kill the different, kill the French, the poor, the artist, all the rotten minorities that disturb the system."(pp. 58-9) Harry recognizes that such an attitude is a greater problem for the French than the English, for it threatens their very survival as a distinct racial entity.

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[6] James Bacque, Big Lonely (Toronto, 1971), p. 40.

André's total involvement in the separatist cause begins to take its toll. It affects his own personality - he has not engaged in artistic activity for months, and he begins to take on the deportment of a hunted animal. It also begins to undermine some of his closest human relationships - he breaks up with Janine, and begins to treat all his old friends with suspicion if they do not agree with his obsession.

The irony of it all is that not only do reasonably detached observers like Janine recognize that the enforcement of Francophone will by terrorist means is futile, but the terrorists themselves perceive this truth. Janine expresses to Harry her conviction that separatism will achieve nothing, even if it is successful, and that most of its exponents realize this:

> They [the separatists] won't know what to do even if they win. It will change nothing. We will still be alone. We will still be a little French island in this vast sea of you. We will still have our Negro kings and our bad teeth and our impossible finances and our churches and priests and all we will be able to say is that we made it ourselves. It is absurd. And they don't know how to bring it about, much less how to make it work if they achieve it.
>
> . . . They have tried to make a complete break with Canada and the Anglos and the Americans, and they have also broken with themselves. . . . When men turn violent this way, it is because they know they cannot win, and if they know they cannot win, why do they not tell us, whom they ask for support? (pp. 64-5)

André recognizes during a mock run of the radio station caper that his scheme is going to fail. But violence when unleashed is not easily recaptured. At a Montreal Liberal rally a terrorist bomb goes off, killing the Prime Minister and seriously injuring André. The latter is carried from the rally by Harry and Janine, and the foursome [Harry's fiancee Shirley from England has joined him] flee towards Toronto. As Harry speeds along the 401 freeway, described as the "Huge and beautifully designed highway joining two incomprehensions,"(p. 167) his mind alternates between turning André in or driving into a concrete abutment and killing them all. Once again the crisis is resolved when the value of human relationships gains the ascendancy over these other alternatives.

The action of the novel ends somewhat ambiguously and uncertainly, but Bacque's central thought seems clear - that the two solitudes, by endeavouring to protect, touch, and greet each other, may achieve a basis for communication that is a fundamental prerequisite to the resolution of their differences. The new sympathetic understanding of the French Canada perplexity that Harry has achieved is poignantly conveyed in his explanation of their dilemma to Shirley:

> . . . we disregarded them [the French Canadians], and they were next door. They had a problem and we walked by. Now suddenly we realize we are getting a message from some guy who is on the other side right now, you hear him talk, you see his face showing what you don't want to see, what is painful to see - abandonment, need, tremendous solitude, so bad he can't say it all, and all of a sudden you remember something - oh you know what it is like to be alone on a lake up north, nothing but trees, and see a canoe suddenly appearing far away. Man, you wave. You wave to him, and he waves back. That's all this is. Well the strange thing about this big lonely country is, you didn't wave. Something told you not to, something bigger and older and smarter. French or English, it didn't matter, they were all the same. So. Now we're waving. And maybe it's too late.(pp. 150-1)

Such inter-racial compassion could never have been brought about by revolution. It had been effected primarily through personal relationships between individual members of each race, whose desire for communication had motivated them to temporarily put aside their differences. Harry's new appreciation of his Canadian-ness has moved him to look upon the French Canada dilemma not as "their" problem but as "our" problem. He has recognized that when a people wilfully determine to be distinct from other nations, they do well to try to eliminate as many of the bases for misunderstanding and resentment among themselves as possible.

I wish to close this chapter with a brief discussion of one novel which predicts that the French Canada dilemma will lead eventually to civil war. The action of Ellis Portal's Killing Ground, set in the immediate future by an early reference to Expo having occurred ". . . not so many years ago,"[7] is narrated by Colonel Alex Hlynka, recent commander of a special U.N. force in South Africa who has been recalled to Canada to help deal with the crisis created not only by a proliferation of terrorist bombings but also by Quebec's resolution, verbalized by the majority Parti Democratique de Quebec, to withdraw from Confederation.

When Hlynka, his wife Edith, his two sons, and his French-Canadian adjutant, J. J. Rousseau, arrive at Montreal harbour, they find the city in an uproar because the separatists have just bombed the C.B.C. building. All civilians are confined to the ship, while Hlynka and Rousseau rush off to the nearest army headquarters to be brought up to date on the latest events. Shortly thereafter Rousseau defects to join the separatist insurgents, as do most of the French Canadians in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Quebec has put up a surprisingly vigorous resistance to the rest of Canada's attempts to force them to rescind their declaration of secession from Confederation. The prime Minister of the coalition Canadian government resigns, and resolution of the impasse by negotiation is about to begin when the United States, tired of Ottawa's procrastination in "dealing" with the terrorists, attacks Quebec under the guise of a U.N. force commissioned to rid the province of "foreign elements." To eliminate the basis for this alibi Quebec sends home all the foreign advisors from China, Russia, and Cuba. Then in an almost comical about-face Canada offers her military assistance to the Quebec government to beat off the American invaders. Such a threat to Canada's sovereignty reduces the civil war to little more than a domestic squabble, as Ted Mason, a military colleague of Hlynka, explains:

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[7] Ellis Portal, Killing Ground (Toronto, 1968), p. 4.

> We're fighting for the independence of Canada - the power to make decisions on our own soil without interference. We don't give a damn about the Provisional Government or who's jockeying for position in their funny little village council. We'll sort all that out afterwards. We're here to show the world that this is our territory and nobody else's. And the United Nations, the Yanks or nobody else is going to tell us how to handle our affairs. (p. 254)

A bitterly ironic twist in this rather remarkable French-English camaraderie is revealed when Hlynka discovers that his wife Edith, a member of the wealthy Anglo-Saxon aristocracy of Montreal, who he thought had been captured by the separatists, has taken up intimate residence with J. J. Rousseau, his former adjutant. The sweetness of French-English entente is summarily soured for Hlynka by this revelation, particularly when he discovers that their affair had begun almost a year previous, well before the civil war broke out. The novel ends on a skeptical note with Col. Hlynka preparing to lead a Canadian force in ambush of an advancing American column somewhere north of Montreal.

During the course of this very absorbing action story, Portal transmits a number of important insights into some of the attitudes, particularly in English-speaking Canada, that have given rise to the French Canada dilemma. Some of the most important of these are communicated by Major-General Tremaine, Hlynka's French-Canadian commanding officer at the St. Hubert army headquarters. Tremaine outlines three areas in which "you Anglo-Canadians" had seriously misinterpreted what was happening in Quebec. First of all, he points out that the French-Canadian enthusiasm for Expo had not reflected a new feeling for Canada, but rather, a renovated confidence in French Canada's abilities to do things on her own. Secondly, he suggests that neither the new vocational and executive opportunities for French Canadians nor the emphasis on the learning of French by Anglo-Canadians had curtailed separatist feelings, for these improvements had been revealed to be mere window dressing. The French Canadians discovered that most of their business still had to be conducted in English. On this latter point, Tremaine added the significant comment that French Canadians looked for sympathy with their aspirations and fears on the part of their English-speaking compatriots, not an ability to speak

French. Indeed, this linguistic competence without understanding the French dilemma had led some newly-bilingual Montrealers to use their ability to speak French as just another means to flaunt their presumed superiority.

The third mistake English Canada had made was to assume that an English-French coalition in Ottawa would provide a government strong enough to iron out Quebec difficulties. What in fact had happened was that racial grievances were now less publicly expressed in that they had been transferred from Parliament to party caucuses. The apparent amelioration of relationships had been most misleading.

Hlynka during the course of his narrative makes perceptive summary statements about some of the factors contributing to the conflict. For example, he shows how far removed from reality the idealistic aspirations of the moderates in Quebec were, and how their action, or inaction, had indirectly contributed to the separatist cause:

> Centennial year, back in 1967, instead of being a unifying force for the country, had degenerated into a series of unseemly squabbles, from the top level, concerning such things as de Gaulle's visit, and from the villages, like the places where the separatist elements had stopped Centennial celebrations and no one locally had had the guts to fight back. The separatists tested the climate and found the moderates had no muscle. . . . The moderates said they looked at Confederation in a different way from the rest of Canada and they talked about a different kind of relationship to be worked out within the federal system. But they did not see where this was leading them, for to deny the concept of a nation at all was to lead to the position of the separatists. It could go nowhere else.(p. 138)

Quite early in the novel Colonel Hlynka, overwhelmed by the violence he had been witnessing, remarks, "A low-key country, Canada historically has tended to have rather mild rebellions or the occasional riot, rather than convulsive revolutions."(p. 78) I think this observation about Canada's comparatively placid history, a factor which I described in Chapter I as one of the obstacles to the formation of a consensus about Canada's national identity, explains why this novel can make such an impact on the Canadian reader. Especially in view of the events that transpired in Quebec in 1970, a couple of years after this novel was published, one is obliged to note with a shock of recognition how accurately Portal outlined some of the issues that gave rise to that terrorist murder and kidnapping. As the Parti Quebecois gains prominence and social acceptance, one cannot help but wonder whether events similar to those outlined in this novel may one day in the not too distant future transpire in Canada. As an adventure story I found the novel most absorbing, and contrary to the opinion of a contemporary reviewer, who felt the book was a "melodrama . . . piled up and spun out . . . written to cash in on the tensions of the day,"[8] I feel the novel merits consideration, whatever its value, as a serious work of art.

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[8] Gordon Roper, "Letters in Canada: Fiction," University of Toronto Quarterly, 38 (July, 1969), p. 361.

It is evident in the light of other fictional investigations of the French Canada perplex that I have discussed in this chapter that Porter's novel documents many of the central problems in this impasse that holds such an important position in the Canadian consciousness. The distinctive elements of national identity are illuminated by any threat to that national entity. The threat of Quebec separatism has clearly made a significant contribution to Canadians' rejuvenated interest in this country's identity.

VI. Tragedy on the Peripheries: The Plight of the Native Peoples

It is clear from the last chapter that as far as a number of our recent novelists are concerned, Canada's somewhat smug claim to be the peaceable kingdom is belied by the widespread antipathy between her French-speaking and English-speaking citizens. The myth can also be shown to misrepresent the true state of affairs when conditions among Canada's two indigenous populations, the Indians and Eskimos, are considered. For most Canadians the hardships and inequities of native life can be ignored more easily than the French Canada situation, largely because these people reside primarily on the northern peripheries of our country, or else on reservations that by definition tend to be isolated from the normal centres of activity - the large cities. Even when members of these groups migrate to such centres, they generally tend to congregate in the lower class or slum areas of town, and thus a consciousness of the social problem they represent can be easily avoided by those determined to be blind to injustice and human misery.

Several recent Canadian fiction writers have tried to bring the plight of the Eskimo and Indian in from the peripheries of our corporate social conscience to a position of central consideration. It is the purpose of this chapter to discuss several of these attempts.

The Eskimos: Roy and Wiebe

One of the main themes examined by such novels is the disruptive effect on the native person when he encounters the value systems and life styles of white society. The irony of such conflicts is not that the latter society is trying to exploit the native culture - indeed, the motives are more often to ameliorate their conditions - but that it is virtually impossible to achieve a compromise between two totally different ways of life. The native cannot live simultaneously in both worlds; his exposure to the material and physical advantages of white society make him forever dissatisfied with his own way of life, but when he tries to embrace the values of white society, he is either categorically rejected because of his "differentness," is exploited by the base elements of that society because of his naivety and inexperience, or, if even partially successful in the new environment, faces the prospect of a limbo-like existence in which he feels cut off both from his old roots and from the clumsily-grafted new ones.

This dilemma is sensitively examined in Gabrielle Roy's Windflower, the story of an Eskimo girl, Elsa Kumachuk, and her illegitimate son Jimmy, set at the American military outpost of Fort Chimo in northern Quebec. Elsa is introduced very personally to the values of white society when she is "raped" by a young G.I., although he is sufficiently gentle and she sufficiently cooperative to call seriously into question the accuracy of the term. Elsa has been thoroughly exposed to the life style of white society through her employment as a domestic at the home of Roch and Elizabeth Beaulieu, the local police constable and his wife, so she is determined to rear the resultant offspring, Jimmy, by standards very different to those normally practiced in her Eskimo community. He is bathed daily, protected by blankets instead of skins, and confined to a playpen to protect him from filth and disease. It is difficult to fault her methods, for the mortality rate of Eskimo children had been roughly two out of every three live births until the establishment of the military base had brought an improved standard of medical care to the area. Elsa becomes so taken up with the care of her son that she begins to take on ". . . that slightly harassed expression of her employer and other young white women who were concerned always about not having accomplished enough and kept setting themselves new and ever more incomprehensible goals."[1]

One of the most striking distinctives of white society that Elsa comes to recognize is its preoccupation with the passage of time, and one's consequent obligation to make the most of the present and plan carefully for the future. The former aspect of this duty Elsa is able to learn, but to worry about the future is for her, a product of a culture that usually was so concerned with the immediate demands of survival that preparation for the future would have been an inconceivable luxury, a constant source of puzzlement. The narrator explains:

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[1] Gabrielle Roy, Windflower (Toronto, 1970), p. 38.

> From the white men . . . she had learned much that was excellent - for instance to get up early, to rush all day scarcely ever dawdling any more, to take up tasks by the clock and not by the inclination of the moment - but to follow them in this strange and constant concern about the future was beyond her.(p. 46)

When the prospect of a prolonged stay in this "immense naked land,"(p. 57) despite having all modern comforts and a loving husband, begins to affect her employer Elizabeth Beaulieu's mind, Elsa recognizes that a white society life style has many disadvantages. In order that her son might be protected from these disruptive values she resolves to move across the Koksoak River and take up residence with her Uncle Ian, a crotchety old man who had consciously rejected the presumed benefits of white society.

That society continues to intrude into her life, however, when Constable Beaulieu crosses the river to inform Elsa that she has to send Jimmy to school. She attempts to flee with her son to Baffin Island, but is forced to turn back when he contracts a high fever. A shot of penicillin at Fort Chimo quickly brings about his recovery. Elsa is given a Quonset hut in the town and begins to enjoy a modest level of material comfort by making Eskimo souvenirs.

Gradually, however, both Elsa and Jimmy become aware of their now limbo-like existence. They are far enough removed from the Eskimo settlement to feel virtually no influences from that quarter, and yet both realize they will never be fully accepted by the white community. This is a particularly bitter pill for Jimmy to swallow, especially in light of the fact that he has learned both English and French. As the years pass, his increasing sense of disorientation make him whimsical and demanding, while his recognition of how different he is from the other Eskimos who do not have his educational advantages cause him to look upon his own mother as a liability. He eventually cuts forever the ties with his past by stowing away on an airplane going to the U.S.A., where he joins the American Airforce. Nothing is heard from him for several years, until one day a radio receiver picks up a greeting from an aircraft passing high overhead. The voice is clearly Jimmy's. The contact is never repeated.

After her son's departure Elsa becomes apathetic, ceases her souvenir-making activities, and finally abandons her Quotset hut to move back to the Eskimo settlement. She shortly thereafter takes on an appearance identical to her old mother, long since dead, symbolizing her re-adoption of the Eskimo way of life. The story poignantly demonstrates how virtually impossible it is for a native person to attain a life style that represents an integration of his own culture and white society. Elsa is completely incorporated into the old culture once again. Jimmy totally embraces the new. Tragically, it seems to follow that there can never be any communication between the two life styles again.

Rudy Wiebe's First and Vital Candle reveals the clash of white society's values with both Eskimo and Indian cultures. Abe Ross, the protagonist, has just returned to Winnipeg from a twelve-year posting at a Frobisher Company store in the North. Shortly after his return he accepts a one-year assignment with the same company to Frozen Lake, a fur-trading post populated mainly by Ojibwa Indians, located about halfway between Lake Superior and James Bay. Wiebe's novel demonstrates that the unfortunate consequences of the clash between the values of the indigenous culture and white society are similar for both Eskimos and Indians.

In Part Two of this novel Abe describes a traumatic episode that had occurred during his stay among the Eskimos. The incident at once reveals the harsh struggle for survival in which the Eskimos were perpetually engaged and the moral dilemma created by the clash of two completely different value systems.

One day an Eskimo trapper had stumbled into Abe's trading post to report that the inhabitants of Ikuck, a small village ninety miles distant, were starving. After dispatching one Eskimo to Baker Lake, 150 miles away, to arrange for an emergency airdrop of supplies over the stricken settlement, Abe and two Eskimo companions had set off by dogteam with a small supply of food. After a very difficult trip they had arrived, finding only seventeen of the original thirty-five inhabitants alive. Some distance from the camp they discovered a woman who had gone mad after eating her three children. Having learned that a similar situation of imminent starvation faced the residents of a settlement twenty miles further on, Abe had started out to attempt a rescue, despite the fact that a blizzard was threatening.

Halfway there Abe had encountered Oolulik, wife of Itooi, the village head, carrying a small, half-dead child. They immediately had constructed an igloo for the night to protect them from the storm and also to enable them to save the child. Oolulik had informed Abe that one of the Eskimo men, Ukwa, gone mad with the cold and absence of food, had murdered Oolulik's husband and daughter. It turned out later that in keeping with Eskimo standards of justice Oolulik had strangled Ukwa in retaliation.

As their conversation continued Oolulik had revealed some of the ways in which the customs and values of white society had disrupted Eskimo life. The advent of guns had produced a shortage in the deer population, for the old custom that only as many deer as could be eaten should be killed had been violated. Even more apparent were the conflicts brought about by the introduction of the Christian religion. Oolulik had complained that praying to the shaman had always brought the deer, whereas praying to God did not. She and her people had attended church six times a week, but this obligation had become dispensable when they noticed that the white men, Abe among them, never darkened the church door. When one of her children had died, Oolulik had abandoned Christianity.

That night Abe had temporarily relinquished his white society morality and slept with Oolulik - again a sensible Eskimo custom dictated by the necessity to keep warm. The next morning they had discovered that Oolulik's last child had died during the night, but the storm had blown itself out. Arrival shortly thereafter at Oolulik's village had revealed that Ukwa's wife and two of her three children were still miraculously alive.

The R.C.M.P. corporal's plane had also arrived, and when his examination of the bodies revealed tha Ukwa had been strangled, his commitment to enforce the white man's code of justice had obliged him to arrest Oolulik. The inappropriateness of this decision had been demonstrated shortly thereafter when the Eskimo woman had hanged herself in her detention cell.

The Indians: Wiebe, Bodsworth and Gibson

Wiebe devotes the major portion of his novel, however, to a portrayal of Abe's sojourn among the Indians of Frozen Lake. For the author, the plight of both Eskimos and Indians was sufficiently similar as to make treatment of both groups within the confines of one novel very appropriate.

Shortly after his arrival at Frozen Lake to take over the Frobisher store there, Abe discovers to his chagrin that Sig Bjornesen, a completely unprincipled white fur trader, is attracting almost all the business away from the Frobisher store by withholding supplies of illicit yeast with which the Indians made home-brew liquor. Bjornesen has a clear advantage over Abe by speaking Ojibwa and keeping an Indian "wife." Abe learns later that the unscrupulous trader, by capitalizing on the superstitious natures of the Indians, also exercises a strong supernatural power over them that has demanded their fearful subservience. The fear is very legitimate, for one Indian, Harry Sturgeon by name, dies after being cursed by Bjornesen for having protested against his unfair methods.

Prominent exceptions to this white man's propensity to exploit the native people are seen in Josh and Lena Bishop, the dedicated local missionaries to the Indians, and Sally Howell, an equally committed follower of the Bishops' religious beliefs, who is the school teacher for the settlement. Because of his unpleasant recollections of religion's deleterious effects on the Eskimos, Abe's suspicions are immediately aroused, but they are almost as rapidly allayed when he realizes that these people do not at all fit into the religious fanatic mold he has constructed for them. As the author explains, "He [Abe] had hated the churchmen who manipulated the naive minds of the Eskimos into super-religious fanaticism, but here he could not find basis for that apprehension; rather only confusion."[2] The Bishops do not attempt to destroy the Ojibwa assumptions about the spirit world; as a matter of fact, Josh asserts on one occasion that such awareness of a supernatural dimension to life can provide an appropriate base for the teaching of the Christian religion. Abe is also surprised to note that the Bishops do not scoff at the Indians' belief in beneficial and destructive voodooism as he does; his own unbelief turns into astounded respect when one of the conjurers successfully specifies the location of a revolver he had lost overboard a short while before. The Bishops do not attempt to proseletyze, moreover, but patiently live and interact with the Indians in the hope that they can demonstrate by actions rather than merely by words the vitality of their faith.

The Indians are won over to Josh's side when he breaks up a drunken brawl in which even Abe had become involved when he discovered Bjornesen inciting the Indians to force their attentions on a beautiful Indian girl. Kekekose, the chief, impressed that Josh had been willing to risk his life to restore order, tells him that they are now prepared to listen to what he has to say. This is the first time that an Indian has admitted as much in the four years of the Bishops' residence at Frozen Lake. Shortly thereafter, several of the leading Indians become Christians and are subsequently baptized. Bjornesen, meanwhile, has been thoroughly humiliated.

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[2] Rudy Wiebe, First and Vital Candle (Toronto, 1966), pp. 325-6.

Wiebe's novel thus demonstrates the most unusual phenomenon of natives and representatives of white society learning to adapt to one another for the enrichment of both. Much is communicated about native values which white society would do well to emulate - close family ties, willingness to admit error, honest respect for courageous activity, an innate propensity to be law-abiding and industrious - all of which portray a much different picture than pessimists about the prospect of native-white society interaction could envision.

The struggle for physical survival as the primary issue of life in the North and the conflicts aroused by exponents of the Christian religion who lack sensitivity when applying the tenets of their faith to the Indian culture are the two central themes examined in Fred Bodsworth's The Sparrow's Fall. Set in roughly the same part of the country as the latter part of Wiebe's novel, the story portrays the young

Indian protagonist Jacob Atook's search for cariboo to maintain the physical existence of himself and his pregnant wife Niska, and at the same time his quest for a resolution to the conflict aroused in his mind by Father Webber, a Christian missionary to the Indians, who has informed him that it was contrary to God's will to kill the cariboo, or any living thing, for that matter.

Two of Jacob's actions have already alienated him from his Indian culture: his acceptance of the Christian religion, and his decision to marry Niska contrary to the wishes of her father, whose will was customarily law in such matters. The father had already betrothed Niska to Taka, who was able to provide a much more generous marriage settlement than Jacob could. Jacob in defiance of that custom had been married secretly to Niska by Father Webber, and then had fled with his new bride to a spot far distant from the Indian settlement. But obedience to Father Webber's teaching threatened an even more vital affiliation - his continued survival in the human race - for cariboo provided the principal source of food for the Indians during the harsh winter months, and refusal to kill the animals meant almost certain death.

Faced with the imminent starvation of himself and Niska, Jacob sets out to track down and kill a cariboo, though not without misgivings. His search is hampered by several factors - his own inherent inferior ability as a hunter, the harshness of the elements, the pursuit by his rival, Taka, who clearly intends to kill him so that he can possess Niska, and the chafing sense of guilt that had been aroused by Father Webber's dictum. His consequent confusion on the latter point is apparent in his action of setting up a pair of cariboo antlers to ascertain the location of cariboo according to Indian tradition, while at the same time praying to Manito [God] for guidance.

Jacob finally overcomes all these obstacles by outwitting and disarming his opponent, and shortly thereafter shooting a pregnant and starving doe that he catches in the throes of labour. The solution to his moral dilemma is achieved when he realizes that while God ". . . sees the little sparrow fall," in the words of a children's chorus Father Webber had taught him, God has ordained that many such sparrows should fall in order that hawks might live.[3] In other words, death is in the economy of the natural world just as normal and necessary as life. The symbolic connection between the pregnant and starving cariboo and the pregnant and starving Niska seems rather heavy-handed, but the link does reinforce the principle that abundant life and abundant death, mutually interdependent, have both been provided for in Manito's creative plans.

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[3] Fred Bodsworth, The Sparrow's Fall (Garden City, N.Y., 1967), p. 226.

These last two novels demonstrate the possibility of some of the values and institutions of white society adapting sufficiently to be integrated into the life style of the native culture. Such an auspicious resolution of intercultural conflict would seem to be the exception rather than the rule, however, as demonstrated by Roy's novel. An unusual re-examination of a very old instance of such white society intransigence is James McNamee's _Them_ _Damn_ _Canadians_ _Hanged_ _Louis_ _Riel_! As the title implies, the story's point of view is American, related by a twelve-year old half-breed who is accompanying his Uncle Joe Campbell, a close friend of Louis Riel, on a trip from Montana to Edmonton, Prince Albert, Swift Current and Regina during the fateful year 1885, arriving at the latter locality just a few days before Riel's execution on November 16th.

The case against the corruption of white society institutions and their representatives is constructed gradually but unerringly. The first contributor is a notorious wolfer by the name of Charlie, who turns out to be a North-West Mounted Police deserter. Wolfers were infamous not only for their threat to Indian livestock but also because of their harassment and frequent slaughter of innocent Indian settlements. A group of Indians have killed Charlie's three accomplices, but they are taking Charlie alive back to Fort McLeod because of a fifty dollar reward for the capture of deserters. Mounties are generally shown in this novel to be engaged in exploiting the native peoples in various ways; when the report that Gabriel Dumont had killed fourteen mounties at Duck Lake is circulated, it is understandably greeted with a good deal of satisfaction.

On a train ride from Medicine Hat to Regina several additional undesirable representatives of white society institutions are encountered. One is a Rev. McDougall, an Ontario Methodist minister who is escorting to Ottawa three "no-fight" Indians to be feted by the government and later by the Methodists in Toronto. The contrived nature of his interest in the native people is demonstrated when a group of hungry Indians huddled around the Medicine Hat train station fails to arouse his concern.

Also on the train the narrator and Uncle Joe encounter an official from Ontario who has been appointed by the government to witness Riel's hanging. In a fit of pique at his arrogant smugness Uncle Joe makes him throw his top hat out the train window. Uncle Joe later expresses his disenchantment with such individuals when he announces that Ontarians excel in only three things: singing Protestant hymns, burning houses, and stealing.* Later, when he discovers the state of prohibition existent in Regina, his animosity is extended to white Canadians as a whole when he remarks, "Who can understand Canadians? . . . Maybe they're human, maybe they're not, but they sure are hypocrites."(p. 95) His disenchantment is increased even further when he is forbidden to carry a six-gun in public view like every self-respecting man in the States does. He concludes that Canada is a backward country.(p. 100)

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* James McNamee, Them Damn Canadians Hanged Louis Riel! (Toronto, 1971), p. 91.

On the day of Riel's execution, the triple-faceted bigotry of the crowd is demonstrated by their delight that they are seeing deprived of life a man who was simultaneously an Indian, a Frenchman, and a devotee of the Roman Catholic faith. This blatant prejudice is stridently evident in the shouts of the impatient crowd outside the place of execution: "Come on! Get on with it! Swing him! Swing the Cathlicker!"(p. 109) Riel's body has to be secretly confined beneath the floor of St. Mary's Church to protect it from mutilation by this rabble until such time as it can be transported by train to St. Boniface for burial. The image of Canada as the peaceable kingdom is once again dealt a healthy blow by this fictional resurrection of an event many wish could be blotted from our history, which was brought about largely as a result of the clash of two completely unreconcilable value systems.

John Gibson's _File on Helen Morgan_ provides some perceptive insights into some of the distinctive values possessed by the Indian people, the promising results when two social workers show a willingness to bend the letter of their agency's law in order to bring about the amelioration of the Indian condition, and the disastrous results when such evidence of white sensitivity to Indian needs is overruled by the social agency's less adaptable superiors.

The story is narrated by Alex Steadman, a social worker attached to an agency providing welfare assistance to Indians living up the British Columbia coast. The title of the book is deeply ironic, for Morgan's chief contention is that Indians are not "cases" or "files," but individuals in need of the security of family ties, a modest level of comfort, the roots provided by meaningful and useful activity, and a place to call one's home - all the prerequisites, in short, for a sense of personal identity no matter what one's racial origin happens to be. Academic theorists and ivory-towered civil servants emphasize the incompatibilities between Indian culture and white society; Alex Steadman warns that such a view can blind one to the similarities that all races share by virtue of their common humanity:

> I work with individuals. Indian communities are artificial in a way. The individuals are the same as you and I. They have the same needs and desires. I've known hundreds of them. What's so different about them?[5]

This remark is addressed to Ernest Luke, an officer of the Indian Affairs department in Ottawa, whose four-year stint bringing "Western aspirations to backward areas" (p. 194) of Africa has supposedly qualified him as an expert on deprived peoples no matter where they happen to reside. His solution to all minority group ills is self-help. Indians need to be given nothing, in his opinion. All that they need is to be moved to central locations where they can be organized in such a way as to raise themselves by their own bootstraps.

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[5] John Gibson, File on Helen Morgan (Don Mills, Ont., 1968), p. 246.

The fundamental weakness of this solution for Alex was that it ignored the fact that Indians were individuals, possessing a wide variety of needs and reflecting a whole gamut of differing aspirations and objectives. They could not be corraled into reserves like animals. Luke's solution also overlooked the fact that Indians had strong attachments to their home environments. They had no desire to leave, and yet they had pressing physical, material, and emotional needs. Alex's poignant dismissal of Luke's theories graphically illustrates the ruinous insensitivity of the latter's position:

> I thought with despair of Luke with his African experience and his brave new world. His ideas were bred in the grey, academic dust of a European university and in the minds of theorists. He might never know the tragicomedy of Indian life, the quintessence of minority thought and action. . . . He would pass through the scene like a butterfly, while the people lived and died and the children slept in dark corners and the dead babies lay under beds and men beat the women they loved and the white man looked like a chunk of cold, hygienic ice. . . . (p. 196)

One of the ironies of white society's welfare system is shown to be its tendency to keep Indians at their accustomed poverty level, in that any money earned on their own immediately reduced the level of their assistance. When the crash of an agency plane kills Andrew Field, one of Alex's fellow social workers, a perusal of Andrew's papers by his brother reveals that he had been secretly channelling extra funds through an intermediary to enable a beautiful, bright Indian girl by the name of Helen Morgan obtain an education. Having been informed of the fraud, Alex resolves to perpetuate it, but his deception is discovered, and he is delegated to go to a private girls' school on Vancouver Island to inform Helen that her education must come to an end.

Alex is amazed by Helen's placid acceptance of this twist of fate, an indication of the Indian tendency to live from day to day only, and to accept all intrusions of fate. She expresses the desire to return to her home, a revelation of her strong ties to home and family which puzzles Alex, who assumes that there is nothing there for her to do except fish and help her mother. But the conflicting loyalties aroused by Helen's exposure to white society are also evident, for she at the same time desires to stay at the school until Christmas in order that she could take part as planned in the school play.

That night she simply leaves on foot for home. Her absence is not discovered until the next morning, but since she has made no attempt to conceal her retreat, Alex soon discovers the route she has taken. Her calm acceptance of this change of plans preoccupies Alex as he thinks of her

> . . . somewhere out in the rain, walking quietly and with self-possession to whatever lay ahead. She was a part of the land. She was not like me, not a stranger. She would accept the rain and hunger and cold. And if she arrived home she would not mention the journey. (p. 226)

The strong instinct for survival that is such an integral component of the native person's psyche is again operating, but it proves defenceless against the evil exploitation of white society. Alex discovers Helen in an old cabin, raped and murdered by drunken white scum.

Modern improvements in communication and technology do not always produce a change in the physical residence of Indians and Eskimos on the peripheries of the Canadian nation, but such developments by reducing white society ignorance of their conditions are quickly eliminating their symbolic existence on those outer limits of society's awareness and concern. At the same time, these indigenous races have become aware that a subsistence level of existence need not be the norm; as the narrator of Gibson's novel expresses it, "It is very difficult to live without things when you know they exist."(p. 190) The resultant clash of value systems and life styles, as these novels have so clearly demonstrated, places the plight of our Eskimos and Indians in a very important position in the Canadian consciousness.

VII. Old Wine in New Bottles: Immigrant Experiences in Canada

> I was standing on a corner [in Toronto] with the temperature a mile below zero and wondering just how foolish I'd been to believe all that junk about the good life, the opportunity, and the blue pools with barbecues and little bikinis and oceans of Rum and Seven-Up that the faceless misfits at Canada House with tape recorders where their brains once were shell out every hour on the hour. . . .[1]

Similar declarations of disillusionment as this one, affirmed by Charters' British narrator shortly after his arrival in Canada, are not infrequently voiced by immigrants to this country whose initial impressions have been described in recent Canadian fiction. Anyone who goes through the trauma and expense of emigrating from his homeland does so in the anticipation of improving his station in life, so it is only natural that he will at first endow the country of his destination with characteristics that intensify that hope. Canada's motives for opening her doors to immigrants have customarily been partially humane, but have been based equally on the need to augment this country's work force, particularly in the skilled, semi-skilled, and professional classes. Canada's mythmakers abroad thus have had an axe to grind in perpetrating the myth of Canada as the land of opportunity and freedom - as, indeed, the peaceable kingdom. Many immigrants discover in rather short order that, as with most generalizations, this legend overlooks many exceptions.

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[1] Michael Charters, Victor Victim (Toronto, 1970), pp. 134-5.

Immigrant experiences in Canada can further illuminate our understanding of the Canadian identity in two ways. The first is to be found in the response of immigrants to Canada, and the second, in Canada's response to immigrants. The former reaction is of course highly individualized, for it is based on each immigrant's initial personal experiences, but the gap between expectation and actuality is the most marked during such a period of adjustment, and the immigrant's sensitivity to difference is the most acute. Insofar as identity is to be defined in terms of difference, elements of the character of Canada consequently emerge.

Aspects of national identity may also be conveyed by the way Canadians react to immigrants. In a sense immigration can be construed as a threat to national identity, for it undermines a nation's claim to distinctiveness. It also frustrates avowals of homogeneity which are so often assumed to be a vital requirement of national identity. Immigration raises the issue of the degree to which a nation can absorb diversity and yet retain some sense of homogeneity.

On the personal level, these issues may be reduced very simply to the question of immigrant adaptability. Assimilation into a new environment is effected primarily by adjustments in attitudes and values, but is often inhibited most critically by more superficial factors like differences of language or colour.

Not surprisingly, therefore, immigrants who do not speak English (or French) have greater difficulty in adapting to the Canadian environment, or more accurately, being allowed to adapt, than those immigrants whose language is English. The complication of a distinctive skin colour makes the task of assimilation more formidable still.

In this chapter I shall be examining how five recent Canadian novels about immigrant experiences in Canada illuminate our national identity. The discussion falls very aptly into two divisions. Akula's Tomorrow Is Yesterday, Gotlieb's Why Should I Have All the Grief, and Sheldon's The Unmelting Pot convey the experiences of white immigrants whose language is not English. Beattie's Strength for the Bridge and Clarke's The Meeting Point examine the greater problems of assimilation for non-white immigrants. Throughout this discussion it will be apparent that Canada's real identity is often being affirmed by the attack on Canada's professed identity as the peaceable kingdom.

Immigrants from Continental Europe: Akula, Gotlieb and Sheldon

One of the most striking studies of immigrant disillusionment written during the period under investigation is Tomorrow Is Yesterday by Kastuś Akula. Like so many of her fellow European immigrants, Mary Karaway, the central character, migrates to Canada in the hope that the appalling memories left by the ravages of war will be dispelled. She naturally assumes that Canada will be a land in which freedom, security, justice and tolerance are values universally embraced, but within hours of her arrival in Toronto from the Shuly area of Byelorussia, she is arrested as a common prostitute by a doltish police officer too obtuse to perceive that her inability to justify her presence on the park bench is because she can't speak a word of English. Such arbitrary arrest and incarceration had been commonplace in her police-state native land, but Mary had assumed such treatment could never occur in Canada. Her resultant sense of complete helplessness is fully understandable:

> This is quite a start. . . . I'm in jail with two prostitutes, away from anybody I know, in a foreign country, with no knowledge of the language, customs, laws, people, no place to call my own. So this is the way I'm starting my life here.[2]

Fortunately, the next morning a more sensitive representative of Canada's judicial system recognizes Mary's dilemma and she is released.

The novelist then portrays by means of an extended flashback the stark horror of life in Byelorussia during the Second World War, when the inhabitants were abused by two opposing forces, the Russians and the Germans. Mary and her mother show mercy to a wounded Russian soldier during a retreat of the Red Army, but this same ingrate some time later returns and kills Mary's two children and her mother before her very eyes. Mary herself almost loses her life at the hands of partisan terrorists, but her life is saved when the young Communist commissioned to execute her botches the job. She secretly makes her way to friends at Miensk and assumes a new identity.

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[2] Kastuś Akula, *Tomorrow Is Yesterday* (Toronto, 1968), p. 15.

After her less than cordial introduction to Canada in Toronto, Mary makes her way to her uncle's farm in the West. She understandably feels intense hatred for the Communists because of what they had done to both herself and her family. Akula goes to some lengths in this novel to portray Communism's evils, the most insidious of which in his opinion is Russia's success in bilking the Canadian people into giving credence to a whitewash of Red atrocities during the war. He also decries the portrayal of Eastern European immigrants as Commie-baiting bigots for insisting upon some form of legal compensation for their former suffering. Akula clearly sees this leniency towards Communism as a perversion of the ideal of tolerance.

During her stay at her uncle's farm, Mary discovers that Kolpakoff-Bergdorf, the murderer of her mother and children, is now enjoying under an assumed name the bliss of an affluent life in Toronto. Resolved to wreak her revenge, Mary leaves for Toronto. She first asks her Uncle Lavon about the prospects of taking the villain to court; his response reveals yet another defect in Mary's conception of Canadian justice:

> Court? What court? . . . For courts you must have sacks of money in this country. How much have you got? So, who will listen to you? You are not even a citizen. What rights have you?(p. 160)

The author portrays this state of affairs as an abdication of responsibility on Canada's part. A few pages later, he observes that the government of Canada, in a determined effort to avoid the unpleasant complications that might arise from taking a stand on such issues, ". . . discouraged 'old country quarrels,' [and] did not care who assimilated whom, as long as all newcomers paid their share of the various taxes and did not swell the ranks of native criminals."(p. 172) Such apparently legitimate governmental efforts to aid immigrants in wiping clean the slate of unpleasant memories constitutes in actual fact a serious sin of omission for this novelist, for it enabled war criminals like Kolpakoff-Bergdorf to avoid prosecution simply by virtue of their change of residence.

Mary, thwarted in her attempt to make her enemy pay for his crimes by legal means, resolves to take justice into her own hands. She discovers that he is living with his wife and two children in an idyllic West Toronto suburb, obviously thinking that he had successfully buried forever his sordid past. In a dramatic sequence of events Mary moves into his neighbourhood, befriends his wife and children, and then makes known her true identity to her enemy. He somehow forces her to accompany him out of town, clearly intending to kill her, but by an unbelievably fortuitous stroke of luck Mary is able to make him drive into a concrete abutment and kill himself while she herself escapes unharmed.

At times the events of this novel are too awkwardly contrived in order to conform to the author's didactic purpose, which is to outline the kind of difficulties encountered by a very particular group of immigrants - those from Byelorussia[3] - and also to remind us that undue pressure on immigrants to efface the memories of past injustices underestimates the severity of the psychological scars left by those horrors. But the chilling realism of the first half of Akula's novel most effectively transmits this aspect of immigrant experience, and the outline of Mary's trials in Canada does much to undermine the myth about Canada as the peaceable kingdom. It constitutes an affirmation of the Canadian identity by negation.

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[3] The fact that Akula is directing the reader's attention primarily to this specific group of immigrants is further confirmed by the following remark, "Some of her [Mary's] newly befriended countrymen told her that when they first arrived in Toronto they too were totally confused, helpless, and alone. Unlike displaced persons of various other nationalities, who were ably assisted by their long-established and prosperous national churches and social organizations, Byelorussians were on their own from their first step on Canadian soil. No national churches or organizations existed here; they had to start from scratch themselves."(p. 171)

Another novel examining the effect that bitter memories of wartime experiences have on a new immigrant is Phyllis Gotlieb's Why Should I Have All the Grief? Heintz Dorfman, a thirty-two year old Polish survivor of Auschwitz, has made no effort to maintain connections with friends or relatives either in the country of his origin or the country of his adoption. His residence in Toronto has provided no compensating sense of security, nor has it enabled him to escape from a preoccupation with the horrors in his past. As a consequence of such capitulation to the past, all present relationships are threatened, that with his wife Sara being the most important.

Against his better judgment Heintz accedes to the request of Mandel Birenbaum, an old friend of his father, to sit shiva on behalf of his deceased Uncle Zolman Dorfman in Appletree, Ontario, not far from Galt. Re-establishment of relations with the many relatives and former acquaintances that attend the three-day affair is a painful experience for Heintz, but when he is instrumental in helping his cousin Stanley to understand more sympathetically the adolescent longings of his son Zevi, he discovers a sense of purpose to replace his earlier conviction about the futility of life. He also discovers that his former inability to love and his tendency to be perpetually suspicious of others are gradually disappearing.

The blame for this earlier unfortunate state of affairs is ascribed to the strength of Heintz's horrendous memories rather than an inhospitable Canadian environment, although the author is no doubt censuring the latter because Heintz's transfer to this part of the peaceable kingdom has been of insufficient moment to materially affect his obsession with the past.

Much discussion has taken place as to whether the experience of immigrants to the United States differs appreciably from that of their counterparts in Canada. Those who suggest that there is a difference have created two symbols to convey the distinctive nature of each society: America is portrayed as a melting pot, whereas Canada is seen as a cultural mosaic. The assumption underlying the former image is that due to the particular cultural climate of the United States, the sooner new immigrants dispense with their racial and ethnic distinctives, the more quickly they will become absorbed into the mainstream of American life. In Canada, on the other hand, immigrants are supposedly encouraged to retain their ethnic identities and thereby contribute to the enrichment and variety of national life.

Both the melting pot and the cultural mosaic images have come under attack in recent years, for they have professed to describe processes of ethnic integration that are simply inoperative in too many instances. John Porter reports on the inaccuracy of the former image as follows:

> In the United States in recent discussions on minority groups there has been a tendency to reject the melting pot theory as both inaccurate and undesirable. Retention of ethnic identity and continued participation in ethnic communities is seen as an important form of adaptation in or adjustment to the mass society of the "lonely crowd." Also, it would seem, that second and third generation members of the non-Anglo-Saxon groups in the United States, after experiencing difficulty in becoming accepted as "true Americans," have returned to their ethnic heritages rather than accept the principle of "anglo-conformity" which is a pre-condition of status equality with the white Anglo-Saxon protestant majority.*

It is important to note that the presence of pressures to conformity is not questioned by Porter's assertion. He states merely that many ethnic groups are taking steps to ignore that kind of coercion by re-emphasizing ethnic distinctives.

Arthur Lower pointed out several years earlier that such pressures to conform, while they may not exist in quite as overt a form in Canada, are still sufficiently intense to invalidate the image that Canada is a mosaic of distinctive but harmoniously cooperative ethnic groups:

> The notion that is sometimes heard about Canada being a "mosaic", rather than a "melting pot" like the United States, is not the product of hard thinking. No one in Canada would contemplate with equanimity a dozen little racial enclaves separated from the general community. The only reality there is in such vague nonsense is the fact that, Canadian national symbolism not yet having developed far, the new-comer has not been called upon quite as forcibly to conform publicly. . . . In ordinary private life there would seem to be just as much

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* John Porter, The Vertical Mosaic (Toronto, 1965), p. 72.

> pressure for conformity as there is in the United States.[5]

Such assertions raise serious doubts about the integrative capabilities of both Canadian and American societies as far as their immigrant populations are concerned, and threaten even more fundamentally the image of Canada as the peaceable kingdom. A noteworthy attempt to examine some of the difficulties created by immigrant inability to integrate fully into Canadian society is to be found in a novel with the rather awkward title of The Unmelting Pot, by Michael Sheldon. The representatives of the story's microcosmic cross-section of Canadian society are all residents of a Montreal Raeburn Avenue rooming house: Alice and Grigore Anghelescus, he a former Rumanian diplomat and she a member of one of Quebec's leading French-Canadian families; Stephen and Ghislaine Wiener and their twelve-year-old son Paul, Stephen being a political commentator with a Ph.D. in Economics and having a Rumanian ethnic background, and his wife a Jewish immigrant from Belgium; Rosemary Blake, a thirty-year-old single girl from England employed at a local art gallery; Brian Holton, a young Canadian bachelor from Fort William working in the marketing department of a U.S.-owned communications firm; and Mrs. Ovide Lalonde, widow of a Montreal notary. All but Mrs. Lalonde figure significantly in the story.

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[5] Arthur R. M. Lower, Canadians in the Making (Toronto, 1958), p. 377.

At the beginning of the novel the occupants of the house have very little to do with one another. To emphasize this isolationism the limited omniscient point of view of the narrator switches successively from chapter to chapter to each of the characters or family units. Grigore has become acquainted with Stephen Wiener, but he has an obvious axe to grind in doing so: he is trying to entice Stephen to invest in real estate which he anticipates will be expropriated for a new highway, although he has little evidence to prove this. The consequent suspicions aroused in Stephen's mind are miniscule compared to those of his wife, but the basis is entirely different: she doesn't trust Anghelescus because he is a Rumanian. The first evidence of old-country prejudice in the novel, this is a rather unsubtle slam by Ghislaine at her husband Stephen, who was also Rumanian.

Little effort is exerted by any of the inhabitants of the house to break out of their individual or family ethnic enclaves. The Wieners spend a good deal of time at the Cafe Corso, operated by a former lawyer from Budapest and frequented by their fellow East European immigrants. Rosemary, who had originally resided in Toronto after immigrating to Canada, had soon moved to Montreal, partly because she found

Toronto "ugly - and stuffy,"[6] and partly because she was attracted by the French-Canadian presence there. She makes no attempt to get to know them better, however, despite the fact that two of them - Mrs. Anghelescus and Mrs. Lalonde - reside in the same rooming house as herself.

This ethnic isolationism is not confined to the Raeburn Avenue rooming house. Evidence that it is a more widespread state of affairs is provided by Mrs. Herbstmann, wife of an immigrant from Hamburg who again is a business contact of Grigore, not a friend. When Alice, during a reluctant visit to the Herbstmann home at her husband's request, remarks that one can form many friendships in Montreal, Mrs. Herbstmann unthinkingly responds, "Yes, there are some good German people in this part of the city."(p. 89) Alice cannot help expressing her incredulity by asking, "You have no friends who are not German?" Mrs. Herbstmann even further exhibits the effects of her ethnic isolation when, thinking to compliment Alice, she remarks that she does not seem French Canadian, adding, "To me you are typically what I call Canadian - or American. It is so alike."(p. 89) The more unacquainted one is with the members of another race, the greater the tendency to assign vaguely-defined traits to all the members of that race. To have even constructed a stereotyped image of a Canadian or American, much less to assume that there was no difference between them, proves that she didn't know any members of either national group very well. Concerning Mrs. Herbstmann's stereotyped image of a French Canadian, Alice wonders to herself:

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[6] Michael Sheldon, The Unmelting Pot (London, 1965), p. 39.

> How could she explain? Speak of an Irish grandmother? Tell Mrs. Herbstmann - politely - that not all French Canadians are little dark, peasanty people? That she had travelled for so many years she had lost her identity? Everything was true, everything was a partial answer. (pp. 89-90)

Perhaps the greatest threat to the preservation of ethnic identity is the pressure to conformity felt by second and third generation New Canadians. Stephen Wiener is disturbed by the fact that all his son Paul's friends seem to be "Scots-Canadians - the sons of engineers or parsons." (p. 10) Paul's rejection of Old Country customs becomes evident when, in response to his mother's observation that most boys his age in Belgium went to bed at eight o'clock, not ten, as he claimed most of his friends did, he sarcastically retorts, "We don't live in Belgium. . . . Or Rumania [his father's homeland]" (p. 11)

One of the chief causes of concern on the part of the older generation who observe these ethnic distinctives disappearing in their children is their fear that no worthwhile value system is being implanted in the resultant moral gap. Bela Firkussy, the Hungarian proprietor of the Cafe Corso, discusses this problem with Old Heinz, a refugee from

Hitler's regime who is now an economist at the Bank of Lower Canada. Firkussy idealistically anticipates that his children's adoption of Canadian values will merely complement their retained European traditions when he asserts, "For me, we must be true to our past. . . . I am a Hungarian. I will always be a Hungarian. And my children are Hungarian-Canadians, rich in two traditions. That is the true meaning of the New World."(p. 136) Old Heintz's retort categorically dismisses as a futile pipe-dream Firkussy's hope that his children's assimilation of Canadian traditions will not entail a rejection of their European values and outlook:

> That is shit, my dear Bela. . . . When your Hungarian-Canadian daughter marries an Irish-Canadian boy will they celebrate St. Patrick or St. Stephen? And which tradition will they teach their offspring? Both, you think? On the contrary, their brats will become good little North Americans without any traditions at all - except those they learn from advertising, and without any purpose except being better off than their neighbours. We live in an entirely materialistic society. . . . That is how your nationalisms and sentimentalities will end. The lives of the little Firkussys and the little Wieners and all the rest of them will be equally empty.(pp. 136-7)

Thus far I have discussed only two of the problems these novelists have raised concerning the retention of ethnic distinctives. On the one hand, undue preoccupation with preserving these differences seems to hamper the development of relationships with other Canadians, thereby preventing a desirable degree of integration in the new environment. On the other hand, the alternative as spelled out by Old Heinz seems to be the bland homogenization of all ethnic groups into a melting pot culture whose sole values are selfishly materialistic. Neither option contributes to the ideal represented by the image of Canada as a cultural mosaic, in which these culturally distinct ethnic groups, while retaining their uniqueness, at the same time are able to live harmoniously together for the enrichment of the whole nation.

The solution to this dilemma seems to lie in a recognition that since a person's individual identity is not wholly defined by his membership in a particular ethnic group, his ability to relate meaningfully and satisfyingly to others and to adapt to a new cultural environment need not be significantly inhibited by that particular ethnic identity. Although one's values have been formed largely by his past experiences in a certain cultural atmosphere, those values require constant re-examination and adjustment in the light of the norms and expectations of a new national situation. A recognition of the advantages offered by one's adopted society will make new immigrants less insistent that their offspring adopt the outlook and values acquired by them as parents in the more stable context of their Old World upbringing.

As the novel progresses, the barriers between the various occupants of the Raeburn Avenue house begin to break down. Ghislaine and Paul meet Brian Holton through the intermediary of Paul's dog, and after a brief conversation Ghislaine invites Brian in for a drink, much to her husband Stephen's surprise. Brian also has a brief but torrid affair with the English girl, Rosemary Blake, initiated when during a visit to her apartment arranged after a casual conversation in the hallway he impulsively makes advances to her and she equally impulsively complies. Brian simultaneously forms an illicit relationship with Ghislaine as well, which says much for his Canadian audacity but little for his discretion.

Neither of these relationships is very convincing, and both collapse by the end of the novel, but they do give rise to discussions about the ethnic identity issue that suggest some solutions to the dilemma of assimilation I have been suggesting. For example, Rosemary, during a meal at the Wieners to which she and Brian had been invited, indicates her realization that one's past must be acknowledged but must not prevent an adaptation to new circumstances:

> I am not a Canadian, I do not think I will ever become one - except technically, by passport. I am formed by my past, by my childhood and how I was educated. We all are. But I do not see why this should prevent me living wholeheartedly anywhere in the world. (p. 173)

During this same conversation Brian demonstrates his somewhat superficial assessment of the situation when he asserts that in Montreal, the barriers between ethnic groups are breaking down: ". . . this city is changing. People say it's becoming quite a European capital. The stores, the restaurants. A real melting pot."(p. 173) For him, coexistence implies integration. Stephen Wiener's reply indicates that a process of adaptation can occur without a consequent elimination of ethnic distinctives: "No. . . . This is the unmelting pot. Because we who come here do not change. All the time we try to adapt the environment to our own tastes and customs."(p. 173)

Dr. Wiener, the primary voice of authorial wisdom in the novel, also sees ethnic isolationism as the main reason for the impasse between French and English-speaking Canadians - a recognition that comes to him partly because of his Old World experience of the negative effects of an undue insistence upon ethnicity and national distinctiveness. When participating on a panel at a Women for Canada conference on the topic "One Nation, Two Nations, or Melting Pot," he asserts that while English and French Canadians are in many ways distinct entities, their problems arise because of their inability to develop their own cultures and societies without erecting protective walls between one another. He remarks that New Canadians come to Canada to escape such crude nationalism, adding:

> We have seen what it did back in Europe, and even in Europe people are now looking for wider associations. In Africa, in Asia, it is different - nationalism is the first fruit of independence. But already the new nations are talking in terms of groups and common interests. (p. 135)

Because ethnicity so often leads to isolationism and discourages a modest level of integration into a new society, Stephen recognizes that certain aspects of such distinctiveness must be abandoned, particularly by the young:

> . . . most New Canadians were concerned above all with the generation that would be born and brought up here. We wanted them to have a good life - and a good standard of values. Our loyalty belonged to the country which gave them this. (p. 136)

Dr. Wiener is not as pessimistic about North American values as Old Heinz was, but he manifests a profound inability to put these theories into practice by attempting to establish relationships with other than his own kind. Sheldon is suitably reserved in this regard however - he wishes to show merely the beginning effects of moderate attempts to break down the barriers to understanding and cooperation that exist between the various ethnic groups represented in this novel. His unwillingness to portray sudden reversals of old attitudes and inhibitions make his book that much more convincing.

Non-White Immigrants: Beattie and Clarke

Such integration, difficult enough to achieve among white ethnic groups, is even more troublesome a problem when the New Canadians happen to be either oriental or black. Two novels examining the plight of such immigrants are Strength for the Bridge by Jessie Beattie and The Meeting Point by Austin Clarke. Beattie's novel traces the experiences of Keiichi Wakao from his boyhood in Japan through his pre-World War One immigration as a teenager to Canada and his encounter with out-and-out racial prejudice in British Columbia, particularly during the Second World War, to the limited resolution of some of these injustices during the years following that global conflict. Because of the period covered the story line is necessarily sketchy at times, but the author's careful documentation of the effect several provincial government edicts against the Japanese had on Keiichi's family most convincingly undermines any claim Canada might make about being a country where prejudice and intolerance are unknown. Once again, Canada's national identity is being affirmed primarily by negation - by the contradiction, in short, of a mythic ideal.

The primary reason for resentment of the Japanese immigration into British Columbia during the early years of this century is shown to be economic, in that most of the immigrant labourers were willing to work at salaries far below those demanded by their Canadian counterparts. An Asiatic Exclusion League is formed to press for reform of immigration laws, and Lieutenant-Governor Dunsmuir is even burned in effigy for refusing to sign a bill carrying out the wishes of the League to close completely B.C.'s doors to Japanese immigration. What disillusions Keiichi even further about this land of professed freedom and tolerance is that certain Christian ministers who should be the foremost opponents of such injustice are in fact among the chief spokesmen for the League. There are some exceptions to this treatment of the Japanese - particularly a Dr. Rutland, who nurses Keiichi back to health from his serious illness contracted on the voyage to Canada. Because of his kindness to the Japanese, Dr. Rutland's practice suffers.

In spite of these hardships Keiichi prospers, eventually purchasing a market gardening farm in the Fraser Valley. Arrangements by proxy are made for Ryoko, the daughter of a family friend, to come to Canada to be Keiichi's wife. The marriage works out most admirably, and within a few years four children are born. During World War I a dimunition of prejudice is experienced, largely because several hundred Japanese Canadians are directly participating in their adopted nation's war effort. A Japanese is even nominated to a local school board, but his election is prevented when an archaic law is discovered which forbids even naturalized Japanese from assuming public office.

After the war the discrimination once again becomes overt: fishing licenses to Japanese are curtailed, they have difficulty selling their produce, and so on. Minoru, a boyhood chum of Keiichi who had established a profitable clothing business in Victoria, accounts for this racial prejudice as follows:

> . . . the owners of Canada fought the French to get this country, and yet the French are allowed to live here - and together - and to speak their own language.

> . . . They have the right to vote too. Having given over a part of the East coast to Frenchmen . . . the British are determined not to share the West with anyone.[7]

The perpetuation of this intolerance is particularly difficult for Keiichi to accept when he realizes how completely his children have adopted Canadian life styles. During a visit to a Japanese curio shop, he recognizes with chagrin that his children wish to dispense completely with the valuable aspects of Japanese tradition - a deprivation to which Keiichi admits he himself has contributed:

> In the presence of richly embroidered silks and tapestries, finest china and decorative ornaments, smooth shining lacquer, scented teakwood and incense, I relived the past. In so doing I grew jealous of such an inheritance for my children and ashamed that I had so determinedly moved them apart from it in order to gain acceptance for them by a country indifferent to their history. (p. 136)

The irony is that no matter how completely the children assimilate Canadian values and attitudes and how totally they reject all connection with their Japanese heritage, they will always be considered aliens by their compatriots, simply because of their oriental physical features. Keiichi's eldest daughter Kinnie has so thoroughly rejected Japanese culture that she is completely insulted by her teacher's request one day to wear a Japanese kimono and hold the flag of Japan as part of a May Day celebration. Clearly the teacher, albeit innocently, still considers Kinnie to be more Japanese than Canadian.

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[7] Jessie L. Beattie, Strength for the Bridge (Toronto, 1966), p. 77.

Because of such attitudes Keiichi's family find themselves in a state of limbo, for they have rejected substantially all of their Japanese heritage, but are not permitted to replace it with their adopted heritage. In desperation, Keiichi tries to recover his loss by suggesting to Minoru that "Until we are allowed national rights by Canada . . . Let us support the Great Emperor, for otherwise we are a people without a country."(p. 137)

The painful realization that they will always be considered Japanese is brought forcibly home to Keiichi and his family by the edicts against their race passed by the provincial government after Pearl Harbour. It matters not that Keiichi has resided in Canada for over thirty-five years, that he has become a Canadian citizen, and that all his children are Canadian-born and educated. All Canadian Japanese are deprived of virtually every legal and human right and impounded like so many cattle in detention centres in interior B.C. Concerning the injustice of this move the narrator remarks:

> In rifts between mountains, in hidden valleys, and in old mining centres or ghost towns, they were concealed from the world and from others they had known, as if Canada was ashamed to admit that they belonged to her, even the children born and reared on Canadian soil. (p. 184)

Their property is dispensed with at prices far below the legal value or else ruthlessly vandalized. Thousands of Japanese are deported to Japan. Most of the rest of Canada remain unaware, at least at first, of these restrictions against the Japanese. When the abuses become publicized after a couple of years, a national outcry is raised, and gradually some of the injustices, such as the elimination of all schooling for children in the detention camps, are rectified.

Several consequences of this outrage, however, can never be undone - the destruction of property, the psychological trauma of detention in a supposedly free country, the suicides committed by Japanese who had lost everything, the hundreds of Japanese who in complete disillusionment had returned "home" to Japan.

In this novel we observe how the distinctiveness of racial appearance perpetuates discrimination in total disregard of the fact that many members of the Japanese race, especially the children, endeavoured so hard to adopt Canadian values and attitudes. The novel demonstrates how difficult it is to achieve integration in the peaceable kingdom when ethnic distinctiveness is reinforced by uniqueness of physical appearance. The novel ends on an optimistic note, however, for the Wakaos discover that this discrimination is largely a British Columbia phenomenon when they move to Eastern Canada and are able to integrate fully and happily into Canadian society.

In The Meeting Point, Austin Clarke shows how Bernice Leach's acute awareness of her distinctive colour and a fear that even the smallest lapse in diligence will make her the focus of racial discrimination augments her sense of alienation as an immigrant to Canada from Barbados. Clarke handles this question with a great deal of subtlety, for while there is evidence that prejudice against blacks unquestionably exists in Canada, the author also indicates that the gravity of the situation is exaggerated by Bernice's vivid imagination.

Boysie, husband of Dots, a fellow domestic and close friend of Bernice, draws attention to a good example of racial discrimination when he points out that Dots earned ninety dollars a month, whereas Brigitte, a German maid who was employed in a home across the street and did precisely the same kind of work, earned 285 dollars a month. The most blatant example of discrimination in the novel, however, occurs when Bernice is virtually assured by a Jewish woman that her sister Estelle may have the room she has for rent when Bernice makes the inquiry by telephone, but when Bernice arrives to make the final arrangements it becomes immediately apparent that the deal is off because of their colour.

Dots contributes further evidence of prejudice against their race when she describes a traffic accident involving a white man and a well-dressed black in which the former is clearly in the wrong. When the police come, however, they immediately assume that the black man is liable, grab and frisk him, calling him a black bastard and a nigger, while white witnesses, much less the guilty driver, don't say so much as "Boo." Dots, cautioning her husband Boysie against too presumptuous a supposition that racial discrimination does not exist in Canada, urges circumspection:

> And that is what I mean when I say, Careful, Boysie, this country ain't your country. And the police, the white people and the papers reminds you it is not your place of birth nor belonging, neither.[8]

Agatha, a young zoology major at the University of Toronto whom Bernice meets at a party, suffers the effects of discrimination because of her relationship with a black by the paradoxical name of Henry White. She is forced to change apartments frequently because people are complaining about her immoderate association, but this outright prejudice is not as difficult to take as the pity of whites, who begin to look upon her as "the poor Jewish kid who got kicked out of apartments because of her weakness for Negroes."(p. 190) Under this kind of social pressure her adamant insistence on her freedom to do as she wishes begins to weaken.

Racial discrimination in Canada seems to take the form of latent assumptions of superiority by members of white society more often than overt expressions of hostility. To less perceptive blacks like Boysie and Henry this paucity of explicit acts of discrimination seems to indicate that prejudice against blacks doesn't really exist in Canada to any appreciable extent. In more observant individuals like Bernice and Dots, however, this state of affairs arouses an awareness of the need for perpetual circumspection. Bernice, mortified at Estelle's behaviour in shouting out of the window to Boysie on one occasion, scolds her sister as follows:

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[8] Austin C. Clarke, The Meeting Point (Toronto, 1967), p. 173.

> Look, you had better learn one thing. We is the only coloured people in this district. We have to be on our best peace and behaviour, always. Everything we do, every word we utter, we gotta be always remembering it is a reflection on all the hundreds and thousands o' coloured people in Toronto and in the whole o' Canada. (pp. 121-2)

Later in the novel, Dots echoes this need for continual vigilance:

> This country could never be home, gal. All the black people here, living in this place, called Canada, be we foreign-born black people, or local-born Canadian black people, we are only abiding through the tender mercies o' God and the white man, and . . . the landlord. . . . (p. 193)

Clarke incorporates an interesting incident into his novel to demonstrate that at times apparent expressions of discrimination are merely construed to be so by an oversensitive imagination conditioned to feel inferior. One day when riding on the subway a small child exclaims, "Mummy! Look!" when he spies Bernice. She, assuming that a reference was being made to her colour, responds by feeling hatred for everyone on the coach. The child's mother and passengers nearby are embarrassed, for they also assume that the child is alluding to Bernice's colour. The omniscient narrator indicates that all the adults were wrong, and that nobody but the child knew that he was awed and impressed by Bernice's beauty.(p. 202)

One of the few times in the novel when the ideal of Canada as a cultural mosaic of distinctive but fraternizing ethnic groups appears possible occurs when Bernice reveals to her employer Mrs. Burrmann her discovery, later shown to be incorrect, that her mother back in Barbados has died. The ensuing compassion shown by Mrs. Burrmann breaks down temporarily the racially-inspired barriers between the two women. Bernice recollects the incident as follows:

> Black woman and Jew woman together, in grief and sorrow, feeling the same sorrow and feeling the same grief, experiencing the same emotion, as if I were her sister, and she were my sister.(p. 176)

This incident, along with Bernice's substantial increase in salary towards the end of the novel, leave the impression that Canada as the peaceable kingdom is not an entirely impossible dream, although Clarke makes clear that the realization of this ideal state is by no means around the next corner.

It is significant that every one of the novels discussed in this chapter ends by creating in the reader an impression of optimism about the prospect of immigrant assimilation in Canada, no matter how questionable that possibility has seemed earlier in the novel. While the quest for the peaceable kingdom is not about to shortly realize its goal, one can certainly conclude from these immigrant experiences that it may eventually have a fighting chance for success. Deliberate retention of ethnic and cultural uniqueness, however, in the cause of creating a Canadian mosaic, seems in the minds of these authors at least to be of much more questionable desirability. National identity is affirmed in these novels, then, mainly by their exposure of the inadequacy of ideal conceptions of this nation's character. The will of these immigrants to build a new life in Canada is a major factor in enabling them to develop a more realistic conception of the multifarious aspects of the Canadian identity.

PART III. IN SEARCH OF A PAST: NOSTALGIA CANADIAN STYLE

VIII. Robert Kroetsch and the Canadian West

Sir Ernest Barker, in his discussion of the factors contributing to the formation of a nation's identity, draws attention to the function of a shared awareness by a nation's members of its historical events and traditions. In remarking on the importance of this community of memories in the development of national unity he quotes Renan's definition of a nation:

> A nation is a spiritual principle, made by two things - the one in the present, the other in the past: the one the possession in common of a rich bequest of memories; the other a present sense of agreement, a desire to live together, a will to continue to make effective the heritage received as an undivided unity.[1]

There are a number of reasons why Canadians' sense of this nation's historical past is a notably weak contributor to their sense of national identity. On the one hand, the very vastness of the country makes it difficult for inhabitants of one region to feel that what happened in another area of Canada was a part of their historical experience. Some sections of the country, such as the prairie provinces, were settled more than two centuries after colonies were established in the Maritimes and along the St. Lawrence

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[1] Renan, as quoted in Sir Ernest Barker, National Character and the Factors in Its Formation (London, 1948), p. 12.

River. As a result, the various regions of Canada possess very differing sets of historical experiences.

Another obstacle to the formation of a national historical consciousness is the vast number of first and second generation immigrants who form a significant portion of Canada's population. Understandably, such people are preoccupied with problems of adjustment to a new physical environment and with achieving a moderate standard of existence therein; becoming familiar with Canada's cultural and historical traditions is not exactly a top priority item.

A third factor hindering the development of a national consciousness of Canada's historical experience arises from the sense of deficiency aroused when we compare our history to that of the United States. The American nation came into existence as a result of revolution; Canada's birth came about by means of negotiation and compromise. Americans have always tended to turn their backs on their European origins; R. W. B. Lewis has carefully documented how important this theme became for nineteenth century American writers.[2] New immigrants in that country quickly learn the value of obliterating their pasts and becoming bona fide Americans with the greatest possible haste.

Furthermore, the United States has had to face several crises during the course of her history which have threatened her very existence - crises, in addition to the American War of Independence, like the American Civil War of 1861-65, the Second World War against Japan, or the Korean War. Such crises have had the effect of obliging Americans to temporarily overlook their differences in the interests of promoting the national unity required to meet these threats to their country's survival. Many heroes have appeared during these periods of national emergency - figures like Washington, Lincoln, General Douglas MacArthur, and others, who still epitomize for most Americans that otherwise imprecise phenomenon known as the American spirit. Such figures and events, identified as embodying important advances in America's development as a nation, act as significant factors in creating a sense of national identity.

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[2] In The American Adam, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955.

Canada, on the other hand, has had no emergencies of a similar nature. Even though the nation was heavily committed militarily during the two world wars, and earned a certain amount of recognition for those contributions, it was the mother country's survival that was at stake more than her own. Most of her military exploits were part of a group effort and provided scant basis for national self-adulation.

In the absence of any nationally-shared historical sense, it is not surprising that recent fictional explorations of the past in Canada should be highly regional and personal rather than national in focus. I wish to examine two of the directions this fictional reversion to the past has taken. One is the depiction of Western Canadian experiences in recent novels by Robert Kroetsch, and the other is the recollection of Canadian small-town child and adolescent experiences in novels by Alice Munro, Margaret Laurence, Harold Horwood, Sinclair Ross, and Marian Engel. Because such memories are shared by a significant portion of the Canadian population, their contribution to a sense of national identity is much more important than the awareness of a common historical heritage. The third chapter of this section will show how expatriate Canadians recollect their past experiences as a means for ascertaining personal identity.

In a recent conversation between Robert Kroetsch and Margaret Laurence, both writers agreed that for them a prominent component of Western Canadian identity was the irresistible urge to escape to a more engaging environment, followed by an insatiable longing to return to the West, at least in the imagination, soon after that abandonment took place.[3] They went on to discuss how this tendency to be torn between roots and movement provides one source of conflict in much Western Canadian writing. I argue in the chapter on expatriates that this is a very Canadian tendency, not merely a Western Canadian one; suffice it to say that the recent novels of both Kroetsch and Laurence verify this desire to return to their roots after periods of physical removal from Western Canada. Kroetsch in a later interview added that his American experience made him feel something like Henry James, who rejected one culture for another and consequently was never fully accepted in either, but for whom this experience provided the necessary distance for the imaginative re-creation of that abandoned milieu.*

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[3] In Robert Kroetsch, ed., Creation (Toronto, 1970), pp. 53-54.

During the past several years Kroetsch has written a trilogy of novels that express his imaginative return to the West. They advance typical components of Alberta's rural past to the level of myth by means of a deliberate rejection of realistic techniques and a wildly ironic espousal of the comic and the absurd. On a mundane level the novels are inter-related by the recurrence of the two towns of Coulee Hill and Notikeewin, seventy-two miles apart and roughly one hundred miles south-east of Edmonton, as well as the appearance of two or three of the same characters in more than one novel. The relationship among the three is far more evident, however, in the recurrence of several common themes that are portrayed by Kroetsch as products of rural Alberta experience.

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* Donald Cameron, "Robert Kroetsch: The American Experience and the Canadian Voice," _Journal of Canadian Fiction_, 1 (Summer, 1972), 48.

The Words of My Roaring, the most realistic of the three novels, re-creates the trying conditions of the mid-Thirties in the West, in which Bible-thumping evangelistic fervour and vociferous political activism in the style of Bible Bill Aberhart seemed to be two sides of the same coin. The novel traces the political battle between Old Doc Murdoch, the incumbent MLA for Coulee Hill who promises paradise if elected, and Johnnie Backstrom, the upstart undertaker of the town who in supposedly typical Western Canadian fashion has returned after an interlude of ten years in Eastern Canada. In a moment of political recklessness, brought on by his ever-increasing awareness of how thoroughly he is an underdog in the political campaign, Johnnie goes far beyond the vague apocalyptic predictions of his opponent by promising the voters that if they support him he will make it rain. Only those familiar with the harsh rigours of the Hungry Thirties in the West can fully appreciate the foolhardiness of such a promise. No one is more shocked than Johnnie when it in fact does rain towards the end of the novel, assuring him of political victory. The importance of this very non-political factor in Johnnie's success underlines the centrality of this preoccupation with the vagaries of weather in the consciousness of rural Western Canadians.

Antipathy towards "the East," by which Westerners always mean Ontario, is another central element in the Westerner's outlook. Johnnie tries to make political hay from the fact that Doc Murdoch hails originally from Ontario by warning a rally crowd of the necessity of standing up against the shysters from the East - "Those high-muckie-muck gougers from Ontario that wouldn't know grade-one hard northern wheat from a bowl of corn flakes." He adds that such villains had never worked a day in their lives, but got rich by stealing "From the poor. From innocent bystanders. From the farmers and the hicks out West."[5] That attempt to localize the inclination to cheat had been belied by the very action of Johnnie himself just a short while earlier, when he had run off without paying for a car he had purchased at an auction sale at which a local farmer was attempting to beat out a threat of mortgage foreclosure by the inevitable Eastern Canadian financiers.

The predominance of a religious zeal bordering on fanaticism is another element of the Western Canadian past examined in this novel. The best example of this inordinate preoccupation is to be seen in John George Applecart, the political leader whose intemperate combination of the roles of evangelist and political activist drives Johnnie in a fit of frustration to smash his radio during one of Applecart's speeches. Closer to home, Johnnie's wife Elaine shows a similar preoccupation with religion. She is always in a hurry to get to church, and refuses to interrupt her Bible reading to perform such mundane duties as putting her hair up.

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[5] Robert Kroetsch, The Words of My Roaring (Toronto, 1966), p. 110.

The elevation of Western Canadian experience to the level of mythic fantasy occurs in the second novel of this trilogy, The Studhorse Man. On the literal level Hazard Lepage, the studhorse man, is engaged in the anachronistic quest on behalf of his superbly-endowed stallion, Poseidon, for the perfect mare. On the mythic level the story can be interpreted as a journey through a chaotic array of Western Canadian historical artifacts and symbols in search of the key to order and identity. This search for harmony is also symbolized in the activities of the narrator, Demeter Proudfoot, confined to a mental institution as a result of his deliberately contrived stance of madness, sitting naked in his bathtub attempting to impose order upon stacks of notecards that document Hazard's experiences. The note of desperation in his thirst for order - for monolithicity, indeed, that elusive goal of so many of Canada's mythmakers - raises some doubt as to whether Demeter's madness is completely feigned.

There is evidence to suggest that Kroetsch wishes Hazard to be seen as a symbolic Canadian, not merely a representative Albertan.[6] His mother was an Acadian from Isle St. Jean, and his father a member of the Lepage family of Rimouski, who were able to trace their ancestry back to a seigneury established on the St. Lawrence in 1660.[7] In his tendency to dream about the future Hazard shares the trait which the narrator describes as "cette mauvaise habitude qui separe les Française des Anglais."(p. 117) Early in the novel the narrator's uncle, Tad Proudfoot, confirms this French-Canadian component of Hazard's identity by indicting him as a "damned coward frog"(p. 15) and a "peasoup loafer"(p. 16) for not being an active member of the Canadian army (The time of the novel's events is 1945). We saw in La Guerre, Yes Sir! that this was one of English Canada's most frequent criticisms of their French-Canadian compatriots.

Two other details about Hazard's past further contribute to the case for his symbolic function as a national stereotype. One is that he has taken part in the battle for Passchendaele Ridge, that crucial episode in the First World

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[6] I am indebted for some of these ideas about Hazard as a representative Canadian figure to Professor G. S. McCaughey from the English department at the University of Alberta, whose informal lecture at a department seminar in 1972 on this topic was later expanded and presented as a formal paper at the ACUTE conference at Queen's University, Kingston, in May, 1973.

[7] Robert Kroetsch, The Studhorse Man (London, 1969), pp. 108 & 117.

War in which Canadian troops played such a prominent part. Finally, the great box-like house that Hazard occupied on the prairie had been formerly in the possession of Derek Hardwick, an Englishman. To see the mansion as a symbol of Canada, formerly under the control of Britain, now inhabited by a character whose origins were French-Canadian but whose total experience was English-Canadian, seems a not unreasonable interpretation.

The symbolic experiences Hazard undergoes during his journey from Edmonton to Coulee Hill, however, are all singularly Western Canadian. The room in which his one-night sojourn with P. Cockburn, the assistant curator of the museum located in the provincial legislative buildings in Edmonton, takes place is filled with life-sized wax figures representing prominent participants in Western Canada's past: an Indian chief, an early explorer, a NWMP constable, a missionary, an early premier, and a university president. The assistant curator, recognizing that a studhorse man could be considered another typical figure from Alberta's past, hauls him into bed to "take his measure[illegible] so that she might reproduce him in wax. Hazard enthusiastically puts up with this inconvenience for the night, but flees the next morning because he is terrified of the past. Narrator Demeter's response reveals the Canadian identity-monger's hunger for monolithicity:

> What a shame. We who assemble fragments long for a whole image of the vanished past. We seekers after truth, what do we find: a fingerprint on the corner of a page. A worn step at the turn in the stairway. A square of faded paint on the faded wall. Someone was here, we know. But who? When?(p. 33)

Hazard, wanted by the law for releasing 800 mares destined for imminent butchery at the horsemeat factory, pilfers the uniform of the NWMP officer to facilitate his escape, and after a brief interlude at the home for incurables he adopts another disguise from Alberta's past - that of a missionary priest. He then begins to wend his circumventuous way towards Coulee Hill. As he journeys across the prairie he is described in terms most appropriate for the archetypal figure from the prairie past - exposed to all possible rigours of climate, yet completely alone:

> . . . he had travelled bent and freezing against the snows of spring and now he was warm; rain squalls came with thunder to drive him across a treeless prairie and now he was dry; hailstorms knocked at his eyes and set the cannonballs of ice to leaping on the sun-packed roads; mud spattered him brown and gritty black; the wind drove dust into his flesh.
> . . . He was the man from whom each farm must have its visits; yet he must eat alone, travel alone, work alone, suffer alone, laugh alone, bitch alone, bleed alone, piss alone, sing alone, dream alone. . . .
> (p. 58)

Hazard is eventually forced to recognize the anachronistic nature of his search for the perfect mare for Poseidon. Indeed, he encounters more mare-like human creatures who make themselves available for Hazard himself to service than he does mares for Poseidon - creatures like Widow Lank, Marie Eshpeter, and Mrs. Laporte. Modern technology has rendered his role as a studhorse man obsolete - or so it appears. It is Demeter Proudfoot, not only Hazard's biographer and fellow suitor for the hand of Martha Proudfoot, but in many ways his alter-ego,[8] who recognizes another development of modern technology that will make Poseidon useful again - as an adjunct in the production of birth control pills from the urine of pregnant mares. Modern technology has converted Poseidon's role from a life-giving one to a life-denying one. Demeter abducts Poseidon, a harem of mares, and Martha to Hazard's prairie mansion. It is there that Hazard is trampled to death by Poseidon while attempting a rescue.

In its evocation of some important elements of Western Canada's past this novel's highly comic surface disguises a rather serious authorial purpose. Exemplifying Kroetsch's spiritual return to the West, the novel demonstrates his recognition after a period of removal how abundantly that supply of memories can provide the materials for superior fiction. As W. H. New points out, the novel debunks several of the myths about the Canadian West held by Easterners and Westerners alike - particularly that which saw the West as the land of opportunity.[9] It also re-examines many of the issues that arose directly out of Western Canadian experience: the harshness of climate, the intrusive pressures brought about by modern technology, the vastness of the terrain, the solitudes encountered in personal quests for fulfilment, the threatening omnipresence of chaos. It is a necessary re-creation of the atmosphere of their past for a people who frequently have little or no sense of history - who can go, as Kroetsch recently observed, "from Eden to the Apocalypse in one easy leap."[10] And yet this reversion to the past is highly personal, seen through the eyes of an idiosyncratic narrator whose madness seems to reside primarily in his refusal to succumb to what in his view is the normal human propensity to abjure reality. Demeter asserts:

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[8] R. M. Brown sees Hazard and Demeter merging as "the duality which exists within man." See "Odyssean Journey," Canadian Literature, No. 45 (Summer, 1970), p. 89.

> The biographer is a person afflicted with sanity. He is a man who must first of all be sound of mind, and in the clarity of his own vision he must ride out the dark night, ride on while all about him falls into chaos. The man of the cold eye and the steady hand, he faces for all of humanity the ravishments and the terrors of existence.(pp. 146-7)

The imposition of order upon chaos is the narrator's chief task again in Gone Indian, the third novel of Kroetsch's trilogy about the Canadian West. The raw data, not on notecards this time but on tapes, record the impressions of Jeremy Sadness, frustrated doctoral student of nine years' standing whom the narrator, Professor Mark Madham of the English department at the State University of New York in Binghamton, has sent to Edmonton to be interviewed for a job in the English department there, described as "that last university in that last city on the far, last edge of our civilization."[11] Contrary to Jeremy's orders not to listen to the tapes, much less make any sense of them, Professor Madham proceeds to decipher the material before him. He describes his authorial task for Jill Sunderman, Jeremy's Edmonton lover, as follows: "Of course I have had to select from the tapes, in spite of Jeremy's instructions to the contrary: the mere onslaught of detail merely overwhelms." (p. 13) The novel, then, purports to be the consequence of Professor Madham's imposition of form on Jeremy's miscellaneous fragments of reality.

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[9] W. H. New, "Introduction," Articulating West (Toronto, 1972), p. xix.

[10] Cameron, p. 49.

Jeremy reveals on one tape that his real motive for going to Alberta was not to secure employment, however, but to fulfil his deeply ingrained American dream of seeking out the frontier. Here is an imaginative return to one's Western Canadian roots with a difference; Kroetsch is recreating the experience of the Canadian West as seen through the eyes of an alien - an American born in New York City.

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[11] Robert Kroetsch, Gone Indian (Toronto, 1973), p. 6.

Jeremy's romantic expectations about the Western Canadian frontier have been epitomized in the person of Grey Owl, "that quiet-tempered English lad who left Victorian England, disappeared into the Canadian bush, and emerged years later as Wa-Sha-Quon-Asin."(p. 7)

Madham indicates that he has sent Jeremy on a quest that he himself would never be capable of undertaking. Confirming later in the novel his wanderlust propensity that Kroetsch and Laurence spoke of as being characteristic of the Western Canadian ["I am a western boy who ever dreamed east. That is my little fate."(p. 95)], he tries to explain his reason for sending Jeremy to Alberta's "bleak and haunted landscape":

> The truth is, I was myself born out there on those wind-torn prairies, on the upper edge of that northern forest. . . . it was I who set him his demanding task, his continent's interior to discover. . . . I sent him out there as on a mission, as on a veritable quest for something forever lost to me and yet recoverable to the world."(pp. 13-14)

Jeremy's whole quest, therefore, a return to primitivism that takes place in a context of romantic optimism, constitutes a vicarious journey of hope not only on Madham's behalf, but for the sake of all mankind.

Those dreams of the Canadian northwest as the true North strong and free quickly dissipate as soon as Jeremy arrives at the Edmonton airport, where he is arrested for suspected possession of drugs. This is the first illusion of many to be destroyed as the action progresses. After extricating himself from the consequences of mistaken identity at the airport he establishes another identity for himself - that of an Indian - to conform to the image that embodies his romantic expectations. He eventually makes his way from Edmonton down to Notikeewin, where he is soon caught up in Winter Festival celebrations. He encounters ice statues of an Indian bearing down on a buffalo and a trapper with a dogteam - two images from Alberta's past that recall the wax statues in the museum in The Studhorse Man.

Jeremy maintains the status of an observer of the festivities until he sees an Indian deliberately lose a dog-sled race in order not to destroy the white man's image of Indians as inveterate losers. Determined to demonstrate that Indians can be winners, he enters the snowshoe race and wins, but earns the consequences of that violation of the rule of white supremacy by being beaten up that night in the beer parlour. Later, while helping Jeremy with his injuries, the losing Indian, Daniel Beaver, reveals the greatest illusion of all. He informs Jeremy that his hero, Grey Owl, once killed a man, liked women, loved to drink, and was quick with a knife. Jeremy, resentful at having his illusions destroyed, responds by asserting that Daniel didn't know Grey Owl, adding to himself, "No one could say those things about my borderman. My pathfinder."(pp. 100-1)

Throughout the novel Kroetsch records Jeremy's reactions to those impressions so much a familiar component of Western Canadian experience - solitude, loneliness, the impression of vastness, the rigours of an adverse climate. Jeremy's preoccupation with these factors arouses memories in Professor Madham of similar experiences. Writing again to Jill Sunderman, he states:

> I happen to know something about cold weather. . . . I know the effects of a Great Plains winter. Your Jeremy, growing up in the east, felt compelled to play Indian; I can only assure you that I have been Indian enough. I prefer to forget the experience, and yet I do not recollect the sense of being - how shall I say? - trapped in the blank indifference of space and timelessness. . . . Jeremy, in his own confused and piddling way, had strayed into a like circumstance, a like experience. He records as much. (p. 124)

In his identification with the Alberta past Jeremy dreams of participating in the Indian attack on Fort Edmonton - although Edmonton is a modern city in his dream, not a fort. Buffalo invade the city after the massacre, recalling Hazard's release of the mares in The Studhorse Man. Both events symbolize the temporary triumph of chaos over the extrusions of civilization.

The ending of the novel is ambivalent. Jeremy's stolen snowmobile is found impaled on the cow-catcher of a locomotive. Whether this symbolizes the conquest of technology over the search for individual freedom is not clear, for the author does not state whether Jeremy was really killed or merely contrived to make it appear so. Regardless of what the correct answer is, it is clear that Jeremy has chosen chaos.

In this trilogy of novels then, Kroetsch is demonstrating that imaginative return to the West after a period of exile that he argued was a fundamental longing in the Western Canadian psyche. This return avoids nostalgia, however, for by virtue of the distance provided by both time and space Kroetsch has successfully developed a highly comic vision that simultaneously debunks some of the idealistic myths about Western Canadian experience while confirming others. Probably the most important confirmation of all is his demonstration that the Western Canadian outlook is predominantly rural, not urban, in orientation.

IX. The Canadian Small Town: Alice Munro and Associates

Investigation of the past in recent Canadian fiction often takes the form of an analysis of the character's childhood or adolescence in a small-town setting. Clara Thomas points to the pervasiveness of small-town origins among Canadians as the reason for this wide-spread interest in this aspect of the past:

> They [small towns] provide us with the major facet of a Canadian tradition, both historically and artistically apt to our experience, since for so many of us a town was the point of departure into a wider and more sophisticated world. . . .[1]

This more sophisticated world is almost invariably urban. It is usually embodied in a person whose viewpoint is given the stamp of authenticity because his removal to the city has made him supposedly more objective, less naive. The narrative viewpoint is also regularly removed in time from the events described, as well as space.

In actual fact this urban-conditioned viewpoint seems more ironic than objective, but this irony cannot be taken at face value, for it frequently disguises the sense of dislocation and loss of personal identity that a transfer to urban living has produced. Such characters are responding to the traumatic realization that, as Arthur Lower put it, ". . . we no longer live in a quiet, semi-rural country, with traditions to match, but are caught in the glare of urban neon lighting."[2] At the same time, such viewpoints also reflect how difficult it is to escape from the influence of these deep-seated rural or small-town values.

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[1] Clara Thomas, "The Town--Our Tribe," Literary Half-Yearly, 13 (July, 1972), 211.

In my view the most successful rendering of a small-town past in recent Canadian fiction occurs in Alice Munro's Dance of the Happy Shades and Lives of Girls and Women. On the surface both books appear to be collections of short stories, for each separately-titled episode can stand on its own. This genre designation provides the most accurate description for the first of these works, but the unifying vision of the first-person narrator, Del Jordan, the integrative effects of recurrent characters and themes, and the primacy of the small-town setting of Jubilee, Ontario, make it more appropriate to consider the second work as a novel. Furthermore, Munro wishes it so, as the title page indicates.

Munro's chief gift is her ability to transmit the fascination of the ordinary. "People's lives, in Jubilee as elsewhere, were dull, simple, amazing and unfathomable - deep caves paved with kitchen linoleum," she informs us.[3] With the precision of a skilled surgeon's scalpel, she probes the innermost idiosyncracies of her characters, yet the moderation of her censure allows the universality of those characters' weaknesses to be illuminated. At times the ability to endure the small-town atmosphere is raised to the level of the heroic.

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[2] Arthur R. M. Lower, "Canadian Values and Canadian Writing," Mosaic, 1 (October, 1967), p. 92.

[3] Alice Munro, Lives of Girls and Women (Toronto, 1971), p. 253.

No story illustrates more poignantly this sensitivity to the fascination of the ordinary than "The Peace of Utrecht" in Dance of the Happy Shades. The narrator, Helen, returns to her childhood town of Jubilee to visit her older married sister, Maddy. Maddy, having completed her own university education, had generously agreed to return to Jubilee to assume responsibility for their invalid mother while Helen went off to university. But after completing her degree Helen had married and moved to the coast. Now, some time after the much-prolonged illness and eventual death of their mother, Helen returns. The two women try to ignore the great gap that has now grown between them, a gap widened further by Helen's sense of guilt as she realizes that Maddy will never leave Jubilee now since she is far too set in her ways. Her pain is augmented by her awareness that Maddy too realizes that she is trapped and that the prospect of any change in her current situation is extremely dim - revealed by her accidental dropping of a beautiful cut-glass bowl. The accident very aptly symbolizes the smashing of her hopes and aspirations.

Another fine examination of the regrets aroused by an awareness of missed opportunities is to be found in "Walker Brothers Cowboy," the opening story of this collection. The narrator recalls the visit of her father, a Walker Brothers travelling salesman, to an old flame in an out-of-the-way farmhouse near Jubilee, where she lives with her blind mother. The narrator's younger brother and she had accompanied their father. The two nostalgic adults dance and have a drink, but they are unable to dismiss the sense of being trapped by an existence whose barrenness is symbolized in the austere landscape.

Munro is not particularly insistent on creating a sense of a specific town in the stories of _Dance of the Happy Shades_. In fact, a couple of the stories, including the title story, take place in an urban environment. This imprecision has the effect of rendering on a more universal level the small-town atmosphere Munro is trying to create. For example, in "The Shining Houses," the author examines the intrusive insensitivity of people conditioned by urban values when they encounter small-town endurance. Mrs. Fullerton, whose husband had abandoned her twelve years previously, ekes out a subsistence level of existence by the sale of eggs, cherries, and apples produced on her run-down farm in order to avoid having to accept welfare. The homeowners in a newly-built subdivision adjacent to her property sign a petition to have a laneway constructed right through the middle of her land because they consider the unsightly farm to have a deleterious effect upon their property values. Mary, the narrator, is the lone holdout on the signing of the petition. She is unable to articulate even for her own satisfaction the nature of the injustice she intuitively knows is being perpetrated by her neighbours' selfish hunger for uniformity and compatibility.

In Lives of Girls and Women the narrative voice is consistently that of Del Jordan, who as an adult is recalling her childhood and adolescent experiences while growing up in Jubilee during the 1940's - a fictionalized version of Wingham, Ontario, where Munro was reared. In an interview with John Metcalf she indicated the importance of that locale in her artistic imagination:

> . . . I am certainly a regional writer in that whatever I do I seem only able to make things work . . . if I use . . . this plot of land that is mine. I'm kind of worried about that, you know. . . . I should be able to write a novel about somebody living in Don Mills, but I'm not.
>
> . . . I guess that maybe as a writer I'm kind of an anachronism . . . because I write about places where your roots are and most people don't live that kind of life anymore at all. Most writers, probably the writers who are most in tune with our time write about places that *have* no texture because this is where most of us live.[4]

While Munro does pay a good deal of attention to the details of setting, the unique texture of this small town is conveyed mainly through her depiction of some of the eccentric characters spawned in that environment. One of the most memorable is Uncle Benny in "The Flats Road." His unpainted bachelor house is full of junk because he values debris for its own sake. Deciding that the time is appropriate for the acquisition of a wife, he responds to a matrimony-seeking advertisement placed in the paper by a Madeleine Harvey, despite the fact that she is an urban alien from Kitchener. They are married, but shortly thereafter Madeleine abandons him. The sense of disorientation he feels because of the unresponsive reception he receives in Toronto when he goes to look for his wife there is augmented by his refusal to secure a map of the city. When he gets tired of asking people directions he returns to the safety and solace of his unpainted house in Jubilee.

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[4] John Metcalf, "A Conversation with Alice Munro," Journal of Canadian Ficition, 1 (Fall, 1972), 56.

Mrs. Jordan, the mother of the narrator, is another eccentric figure, the subject of the segment entitled "Princess Ida." Her primary fault in Del's eyes is an inordinate preoccupation with religion, demonstrated by her squandering of a 250 dollar legacy on Bibles to distribute to the town's "heathen," in spite of her family's great poverty. Del remarks that the act had only one beneficial effect: it cured her of religion for life. (p. 76)

Mrs. Jordan is another character who feels trapped by a small-town environment. She considers the interests of the majority of the inhabitants to be beneath her intellectual notice. In a later story we learn that her sole means of escape is to listen to a Toronto radio station rather than the local one, because the former ". . . brought us the Metropolitan Opera, and news with no commercials, and a quiz program in which she competed with four gentlemen who, to judge from their voices, would all have little, pointed beards."(p. 149) She also demonstrates her presumed mental superiority by writing caustic letters to the newspaper under the nom de plume of "Princess Ida."

Whenever a conflict arises between her pose of intellectual vitality and her religious bigotry, the latter a product of her small-town viewpoint, it is this last quality that predominates. This inconsistency is most clearly evident in her attitude to Dr. Comber, the atheist member of the local book club, about whom she scornfully asks, "What good is it if you read Plato and never clean your toilet?" (p. 74) Del recognizes that her mother has reverted to the values of Jubilee.

The aberrations in conduct brought about by the emphasis on the superficialities of religion rather than its moral values is a subject of recurrent examination in this novel. We have already noted how it allows Mrs. Jordan to ignore the needs of her family in her zeal to evangelize the heathen of Jubilee. The failure of religion in affecting moral conduct is particularly evident in the young, as demonstrated in the following description of three working girls of Jubilee:

> They were tolerant of what most people in town would think of as moral lapses in each other, but quite intolerant of departures in dress and hair style, and people not cutting the crusts off sandwiches, at showers. (p. 182)

A rather more serious aberration of religious fervour occurs later in this same episode, "Baptizing." Del forms a romantic attachment with Garnet French, a recent Baptist convert whom she first meets at a revival meeting. The romance progresses reasonably satisfactorily until Garnet takes Del to meet his family, clearly for him a preliminary to imminent marriage. A short time later he informs Del that she will have to be saved and baptized in order that they might get married (she was only United Church, and therefore by definition an infidel in his Baptist eyes). When she refuses he tries to drown her, another illustration of the failure of religious fervour to penetrate one's value system and conduct.

One of the most impressive accomplishments in these two books is Munro's ability to refrain from adopting a patronizing attitude towards these figures from her small-town past - a difficult accomplishment because the narrative voice is removed in both space and time from the events described. The key to her success in this regard lies in the fact that she is often more critical of her own inadequacies as a participant in the action than she is of others. The idiosyncracies of others are thus rendered with more compassion than censure, which gives this portrayal of a Canadian small town both balance and integrity.

Margaret Laurence's A Bird in the House, a work of fiction that again simultaneously exhibits the traits of both an episodic novel and a volume of short stories, constitutes another very sensitive re-creation of a Canadian small town's past. In an interview with Donald Cameron, Mrs. Laurence expressed the view that the attempt of the individual to come to terms with his own past in order to ascertain the nature of his present identity, a very Canadian theme, in her opinion, also provided the key to personal freedom:

> . . . the whole process of every human individual coming to terms with your own past, with your childhood, with your parents, and getting to the point where you can see yourself as a human individual no longer blaming the past, no longer having even to throw out all the past, but finding a way to live with your past, which you have to do.[5]

As in Munro's books, Laurence employs the retrospective narrator technique to provide the distance necessary for reliability. The fictional small town of Manawaka, Manitoba, is already familiar territory because it is the setting for two earlier novels, The Stone Angel and A Jest of God. The central consciousness is adult, however, and the response to events occurs as they happen, in these two earlier works. In A Bird in the House Vanessa McLeod, though now an adult, recalls her childhood experiences and perceptions, a juxtaposition of two viewpoints that provides a tension not present in the earlier novels. Dobbs makes the interesting observation that the child's viewpoint also conveys the impression that this small-town outlook is very much a phenomenon of the unrepeatable past:

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[5] Donald Cameron, "Margaret Laurence," Quill and Quire, 38 (March, 1972), 3.

> The filter of a child's mind between us and the events gives them a legendary quality, heightens the emotional charge. Yet at the same time [it] reminds us that this small-town world is gone forever, vanished with childhood - not just the narrator's childhood, but Canada's.[6]

Although these stories portray small-town life about a decade earlier than those of Alice Munro - the Depression years, in short - many of the themes are identical. One of these is the sense of quiet desperation that pervades the lives of many of the characters - particularly the more sensitive kind. Like Minny in Munro's "Peace of Utrecht," they recognize that they are trapped, yet are powerless to extricate themselves. Vanessa's Aunt Edna is one good example - bitterly single, yet still retaining her sense of self-deprecating ironic humour. Vanessa's cousin Chris, the subject of the story "Horses of the Night," is another victim of failed aspirations. He had wanted to become a civil engineer, but because of his family's impecunious circumstances found himself going from one salesman's job to another, then into the army, and finally had to be confined to an asylum because of a complete mental breakdown.

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[6] K. Dobbs, "A Certain Relish for Tears," Saturday Night, 85 (August, 1970), 27.

Another solution to the limitations and hardships of this harsh life is to adopt a mask. Vanessa's paternal grandmother assumes a stance of cultural superiority, especially in relation to Vanessa's grandparents on her mother's side, the Connors, whom she despises because they are famine Irish. She devotes the majority of her time and efforts to trying to be a lady.

Grandfather Connor's mask is that of a bear as far as Vanessa is concerned; the enormous bear coat he wears in winter is an appropriate symbol of his gruffness and insensitivity. Completely devoted to the work ethic ("I can't abide people standing around doing nothing," he tells Vanessa on one occasion[7]), he stalks around like a caged bear when his work activities are forced to come to a standstill every Sunday. When a very natural interlude of broken weeping because of his wife's death causes a temporary removal of this mask of obduracy, Vanessa feels revulsion, not sympathy.

Because Laurence's narrator is quite a bit younger than Munro's Del Jordan, a much more intolerant and uncomprehending vision of a Canadian small town is conveyed. For this reason the onus for a compassionate response to her portrayal is placed on the reader. Laurence arouses such reactions in her delineation of Vanessa's incomprehension of tragedy particularly, as when her father dies in the title story, "A Bird in the House," or when the half-breed Piquette Tonnerre and her two children die in a fire in "The Loons," or when her grandmother dies in the episode just referred to. The adult narrator appropriately refrains from evidencing compassion or understanding in order that the uncomprehending numbness of the child's response might be more effectively conveyed.

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[7] Margaret Laurence, A Bird in the House (Toronto, 1971), p. 175.

One of the finest depictions of childhood and adolescence in a small town in recent Canadian fiction is Harold Horwood's Tomorrow Will Be Sunday. In this novel, a portrayal of Caplin Bight, a Newfoundland outport, during the thirties, the balancing urban viewpoint is provided by Christopher Simms, who had left Caplin Bight to get a university education, but returned to be the new elementary school teacher. He explains to Eli Pallisher, his young confidant who serves as the central character in the novel, his rationale for returning:

> Sooner or later, I believe, you'll find that life is better and fuller here than in any city. . . . When you grow up here you're a separate breed, forever. You may become a professor at a great university, or a research scientist, or something that I can't guess at, but I

> know one thing - you'll be a Newfoundlander, and a bayman, to the end of your days.[8]

By his ensuing behaviour Christopher clearly shows that his temporary urban displacement has had two effects upon his outlook: he is even more critical than before his departure of Caplin Bight's failings, but he is also more appreciative of its virtues and benefits. As indicated above, he firmly declares that such a past forms a significant aspect of the individual's current identity.

Both in the classroom and outside it, Christopher exercises a profound influence upon Eli. The former ultimately becomes the victim of false accusations of immorality, however, largely because of his refusal to capitulate to the harsh and narrow evangelicalism of Caplin Bight's town fathers, and is unjustly jailed. Eli comes to see that this perverted version of the Christian religion is based on superstition rather than faith, on ignorance more than deliberate bigotry. But when Eli's non-conformist views become apparent, his father drives him from the home, as much because of community pressure as from personal intolerance. Eli receives ample compensation for this banishment, however, for he is able to enjoy fully the openness and honesty of Christopher - a refreshing change from what he had been used to, for "Such relationships were almost undreamed-of in Caplin Bight, where all deep emotion was either repressed or sublimated into the transports of religious ecstasy. (p. 116)

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[8] Harold Horwood, Tomorrow Will Be Sunday (Garden City, N.Y., 1966), p. 206.

Eventually Christopher's virtue and honesty prevail over the townspeople's ignorance and suspicion, and they are won whole-heartedly over to his side after his release from prison. By being able to share vicariously in Christopher's experiences and insights, Eli is saved from most of the shock and sense of alienation that he would likely have otherwise experienced after going away to university in St. Johns. His expectations are realistic and mature now, for Christopher had helped him to come to the realization that . . .

> The important thing was not that life should be gay, or that its yearnings should be fulfilled, but that it should have a pattern - that it should not be meaningless and ugly, and squandered in trivial discords, as so many lives seemed to be. (p. 368)

I wish to conclude this section with a consideration of two novels that portray the persistence of small-town values when a product of that environment moves to an urban location. A most compelling portrayal of the discomfiture brought about by a small town youth's encounter with the big city occurs in Sinclair Ross's Whir of Gold. Sonny McAlpine, a talented clarinetist from a small town in Saskatchewan, discovers to his chagrin that he is in a very different league indeed when he tries to make the big time nightclub circuit in Montreal. Discouraged and almost penniless - he has even had to pawn the instrument of his livelihood, his clarinet, in order to subsist - he falls into the company of Madeleine, a girl from Halifax who has been obliged to turn to prostitution in order to survive in so inhospitable an environment as Montreal. They join forces, as it were, to cope with the sense of alienation and displacement induced in them both by this common enemy.

It soon becomes very clear that Sonny is experiencing the same kind of reaction that Bruce Hutchison described thirty years ago when he remarked that Montreal exuded ". . . a certain glittering sinfulness and sophistication, which makes us simple western Canadians feel very young, innocent, and gauche."[9] Sonny's self-conscious self-disapprobation is a perpetually recurrent theme. He saw himself as "still a little raw, with a tendency to gape,"[10] and "afraid of involvement, Saskatchewan Main Street to the core. . . ."(p. 7) Ross presents the reader with a dilemma in this regard, however, for Sonny tells himself that his "big-raw-wholesome-kid-from-the-West look" is merely a front to deceive Eastern Canadians.(p. 6) The question is whether this is merely a rationalization of his feeling of gaucheness, or whether it is in fact deliberately contrived.

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[9] Bruce Hutchison, The Unknown Country (Toronto, 1948), p. 66.

[10] Sinclair Ross, Whir of Gold (Toronto, 1970), p. 6.

Ensuing events would seem to indicate that an interpretive compromise is in order: Sonny is sufficiently gullible to be deluded by others, but he is self-critical and perceptive enough to recognize the advantages of a contrived naivety.

When his fellow boarder, Charlie, tries to talk Sonny into joining him in the robbery of a jewelry store, Sonny wonders if Charlie is choosing him . . .

> Because I was so big and raw? Because so much Saskatchewan was sticking out nobody would ever think of connecting me with a 'job'? . . . A big, stubborn lunk with no idea of the odds against him, up to his eyes in small-town smugness. . . ."(p. 90)

For Madeleine, who has assumed the role of Sonny's guiding light in the midst of this morass of evil, Charlie represents the sinister unknown of this big city. She warns Sonny, "It's just the way he talks - and looks - and you being from Saskatchewan and not knowing how they do things." (p. 47)

Sonny later confirms this feeling of ineptitude in knowing how to evaluate Charlie's character and offer when he demurs, "I don't know. I'm from the farm and a prairie Main Street where people are exposed, comparatively simple. Easily taken in; not fit to judge."(p. 120) The apex of his expressions of insecurity occurs when he tells Charlie, ". . . if you'd pick me for somebody to count on - well, it means I couldn't count on you."(p. 63)

This exposure to an alien urban environment awakens Sonny to the positive values inherent in his small-town origins. One of these was the importance of the individual, a key to the maintenance of one's self-image. Early in the novel Sonny remarks:

> Live in the city a hundred years and you'll never be convinced that they look without looking, neither see nor care. On the farm you count. There are so few of you - you feel known and watched. Afterwards you never quite come to terms with crowds and anonymity. (p. 11)

Later, at a moment of supreme depression, Sonny expresses the wish to return to his former environment:

> . . . I was tired; I hated Montreal; I wanted to go home. . . . I wanted to go back to being a big frog in my little puddle again, to be known, needed, talked about. (p. 79)

Sonny is thus exhibiting precisely the Western Canadian inclination to leave, followed shortly thereafter by a hunger to return, that Kroetsch identified.

Sonny's confidence seems to return whenever he plays his clarinet, for in so doing he is able to combine the discipline born of dedication and hard work with the freedom born of closeness to the land - both small-town values instilled in him by his past:

> Improvise - let go, yield to what you feel, project it - wasn't that the way to make good jazz? To be away out and at the same time in control. . . . I had the discipline - a feeling for it, right to the marrow of my inner-directed Presbyterian bones - and wasn't there a vagrant streak as well? All my prairie common sense and caution notwithstanding, hadn't I picked up and taken to the road? (p. 126)

Later, while he is actually playing, he describes the experience in terms of images familiar to a rural Westerner:

> As I played, as skips and runs turned into tunes, as tunes did tricks, idled and bounced, ran backwards, on their heads, I felt dilated, sure. Like a bronco that has jumped the bars of its corral - good, firm earth beneath him, the road open to the sky. (p. 127)

But Sonny's dilemma is that he is unable to earn a living playing his clarinet, for no nightclub wants him. And ironically, he cannot return home again, for as Charlie points out, his Montreal experience has spoiled him, so that he would never be satisfied, would never fit in, in his home town environment. (p. 106) He therefore joins in Charlie's robbery plans, and is fortunate to escape with only a bullet wound in the foot when the jewelry store proprietor draws a gun as they make their getaway.

Earlier in the novel, Sonny had expressed in an unguarded moment a self-confidence bordering on the naive:

> I was still Sonny McAlpine. I still had purpose, identity. Things had gone wrong but only because of miscalculation, unlucky breaks. At the worst, cocksureness, too big an opinion of myself. A Main Street head. Within myself, though, I was still intact. Damage temporary. Still a long way from the point of no return. (p. 53)

This self-sufficiency characterizes his outlook at the end of the novel also, but there is left an ominous impression that it will lead him into still further grief. Madeleine, on whom Sonny had depended more than he realized, now recognizes that Sonny considers her redundant. And Charlie has yet to show up with his share of the robbery loot. The reader is left with a great sense of the ambivalent - that the clash of these two value systems, the urban present and the rural past, has produced disruption, but not change.

A most uncomplimentary portrayal of her small-town past is to be found in the description of Godwin, Ontario, by the first-person narrator of Marian Engel's The Honeyman Festival. Godwin ranks in harshness with Sinclair Ross's Horizon in As For Me and My House and Hugh MacLennan's Grenville in The Precipice. Engel's novel covers a period of less than twenty-four hours in the life of Minn Burge, operator of a fourteen-room boarding house in slum downtown Toronto, who is pregnant with her fourth child and alone while her journalist husband is on assignment in Nepal.

It soon becomes evident that Minn too is living a life of lonely alienation in this urban environment. She remarks, "We live isolated, furious, alone in an urban desert. Paying for independence with hysteria. If there's no help we cannot kiss and part, we have to go slogging on."[11]

Minn's sole defence against madness is to idealize one carefree portion of her past - her premarital sojourn in Europe as the companion of a famous movie director by the name of Honeyman. Unlike Sonny McAlpine, Minn recalls her small-town past with horror rather than nostalgia. Her rather clipped, aloof description of the place barely disguises her contempt:

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[11] Marian Engel, The Honeyman Festival (Toronto, 1970), p. 87.

> Godwin was two hundred miles to the west, a town that wore its railway station at its centre like a rhinestone in a belly-dancer's navel. It did not have a good reputation. It was said to be closed, snobbish, and polluted. And nobody interesting had ever come out of it except Willie Williams and the readers of Flash and Hush knew all about him.(p. 68)

Her infrequent visits to her mother and maiden aunt, Minn recalls, bordered on the traumatic. By comparison, return to Toronto was a positive relief. The insidious effect of this small town is apparent in her girlhood friend, Annabel MacGregor, a medical doctor, who had established her practice in Godwin, and as a result was ". . . more Godwin than Mother now, tight, unforgiving, righteous."(p. 29)

This reaction is not characteristic of the customary response fictional characters make to their small-town pasts, because it is unmitigated by any sense of empathy or understanding of that life-style. Each of these authors is critical of the hypocrisy and narrowness and prejudice so frequently found in the small town, but most are also consistent in conveying the virtues of the ordinary to be found there. My point in this chapter has been to describe some of the chief characteristics of small town life that Canadian writers have conveyed in order to illuminate this body of traditions and memories, shared by so many Canadians, that Renan suggested were integral components of any nation's self-consciousness.

X. The "Let's Split" Syndrome: Canada Through the Eyes of Her Expatriate Sons

> If there is one experience more effective than another for discovering one's identity, it is removal from one's familiar surroundings, and the largest removal of all is from one's country.[1]

Such a thirst to go abroad is shared by a remarkable number of Canadians. This wanderlust is to be explained in part by the human tendency not only to desire an extension of one's knowledge about the unknown, but also to romanticize the unknown - to look upon it as a place to which one can escape from the unpleasant realities of the present.

There would seem to be a particularly Canadian version of this "Let's split" syndrome, however, that is to be explained in terms other than a mere human hunger for discovery. There is an inherent "otherness" in the Canadian mentality that endows far-away pastures with inordinate greenness. This is accounted for in part by the Canadian propensity to disparage things Canadian - to assume that conditions have got to be better elsewhere. There is evidence here of a carry-over of the colonial mentality; as E. K. Brown expressed it, ". . . most Canadians continue to be culturally colonial . . . they set their great good place somewhere beyond their own borders."[2] The attitude is also aroused by a consideration of the presumed disadvantages of Canada, cultural as well as climatic. This is particularly true for most of Canada's expatriate writers and artists.

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[1] Arthur R. M. Lower, Canadians in the Making (Toronto, 1958), pp. 399-400.

The Longing to Go Abroad: Hunter, Engel and Roy

Several instances of this desire to seek the great good place beyond Canada's borders are portrayed in recent Canadian fiction. Nora, the narrator's forty-year old lover in Hunter's Erebus, longs to get away from Canada for awhile. An important element in her dream is the assumption that Europe, her idealized travel goal, is in some unspecifiable way fundamentally different from North America:

> You know, I've wanted to get out of this country for thirty years. Not that there's much wrong here. I've got nothing against the place. It's just the thought of dying here without having seen anything else, you know. Sure I've been down to the States a few times, and Toronto and as far west as Edmonton [her home is Winnipeg] . . . but it's all the same as it is here. I really have to see Paris and Rome and those places.[3]

The element of simple curiosity is apparent here, but there is also operative a process of unconscious insensitivity to the wide variety of experience available in North America. The narrator-participant cannot bring himself to dispel her illusion, but he remarks to himself that it is all a romantic dream.

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[2] E. K. Brown, "The Problem of a Canadian Literature," in A. J. M. Smith, ed., Masks of Fiction (Toronto, 1961), p.48.

[3] Robert Hunter, Erebus (Toronto, 1968), p. 147.

Earlier in the novel this narrator makes a very perceptive remark about the Canadian desire for flight to parts unknown: he identifies it as a product of what he considers to be the chronic Canadian inclination to complain, and asserts that it is really a failure to face up to one's personal inadequacies:

> The trouble with Canada - one of their themes. The trouble with Winnipeg. The trouble with North America. They heap these all together, and what they mean is the trouble with the universe; in other words, the trouble with _them_. But you don't say it in so many words. It's In to complain bitterly about Canada, Winnipeg and North America, and to want desperately to escape to Europe. What will Europe offer? A little atmosphere, a few different languages, an ancient castle here and there, pubs with Guinness, Metro stations, cheap wine, more prostitutes, easier abortions, more red tape. . . . The trouble with _me_ is the _only_ issue. (p. 36)

Such a remark very effectively deflates the romantic expectations which tend to characterize the Canadian thirst for travel abroad.

Sarah Porlock's desire to leave Canada in Marian Engel's _No Clouds of Glory_ arises from a thorough disenchantment with Canada's cultural environment. Unlike Nora of Hunter's novel, Sarah knows whereof she speaks, for she has spent some time in Europe before. Her view of Canada is significantly jaundiced, however, by her own personal difficulties at St. Ardath's College. When her brother-in-law Eldon McBreen tries to talk Sarah into staying in Canada by arguing that there are hundreds of perfectly good minds here for her to sharpen her wits on, she replies:

> Oddly enough there aren't. Something happens, Eldon, once people settle down here. The edges are dulled. . . . It's something in the air, and perhaps a fundamental disbelief in temporal values. . . . But we keep ourselves isolated from - the passion of making literature - from the passion of discovery. That's why we don't produce anything. And I want to produce, I want to get into a world where creation . . . is a fact, where ideas are important, where people are tough on you and where if you turn out something good nobody, but nobody, will say it's "cute."[4]

She adds that most good Canadian novelists are wise enough to live abroad, implying that she is taking her cue from them: "I'm not strong enough, maybe I don't have enough real personality of my own, to survive in a climate like this."(p. 128) Unfortunately, this remark about survival contains a prediction much more foreboding than she intended, for there is a strong suggestion at the end of the novel that she is going to commit suicide in a Montreal hotel. Canada has merely been a convenient scapegoat on which to heap the abuse that is emanating from her own personal sense of disorientation and lack of achievement.

Gabrielle Roy's The Road Past Altamont provides additional insight into the Canadian penchant to go abroad, this time from a French-Canadian point of view. Christine, feeling the urge to leave Canada for a couple of years and go to Europe, rationalizes this desire for her mother's benefit by arguing that she had been brought up to believe that France was her ancestral home, and that her deepest roots lay there. Maman categorically replies, "Well, it's not true. That's the greatest of all the chimeras we've ever fostered."[5]

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[4] Marian Engel, No Clouds of Glory (Don Mills, Ont., 1968), pp. 127-8.

The myth that Europe is the cultural touchstone for Canada is thus dealt a severe blow, but undaunted, Christine goes to Paris anyway. She sends back to her mother vivid postcards and glowing reports of her experiences in Europe, but the retrospective distance of the narrator from the story enables her to put this enthusiasm into its proper perspective: "The waiting emptiness, the lonely, slightly poignant expanses of my own country had not returned to me yet to pluck at my heart."(p. 145) Experience abroad was to awaken her to some of the heretofore unrecognized values of her homeland.

Expatriate Insights into the Canadian Identity: Bacque, Levine, Richler and Reid

One of the most interesting consequences of physical removal from Canada, be it brief or extended, is the remarkable elucidation of one's identity as a Canadian that frequently ensues. Harry Summers, the artist narrator of James Bacque's Big Lonely, returns to Canada after some rather disillusioning experiences in London which had led ultimately to his temporary abandonment of his English fiancee, Shirley. Like so many of his compatriots, he had gone to England to escape a sense of futility and degradation of the personality, aroused in his case by a Toronto advertising job. To his chagrin, he had discovered a similar pointlessness to his London existence, so he returns to Canada seeking the solace of his French-Canadian friends André and Janine. Shortly after his arrival he writes to Shirley about how tremendously free he feels now that he is back in Canada after ". . . all those years cribbed in England."[6] He exuberantly continues:

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[5] Gabrielle Roy, The Road Past Altamont (New York, 1966), p. 136.

> Something is happening here in dear old Grannyda which I don't understand yet but which is mysteriously part of me. Anyway I DON'T feel chased and hemmed here, and I have for years thought I would. Rather the reverse, liberated. (p. 50)

His optimism is so excessive that he invites her to come over to Canada and join him - a kind of expatriotism in reverse:

> You will love it. Everything here suddenly seems possible again. Canada after Europe is like hearing Beethoven after Brahms. The fist up, the heart thumping, hope and struggle again. (p. 50)

The reversal in Harry's attitude about Canada is a little difficult to believe, but lest the reader dismiss his effervescence as the consequence of temporary inebriation, Bacque has Harry maintain this tone of patriotic enthusiasm in his second letter to Shirley:

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[6] James Bacque, Big Lonely (Toronto, 1971), p. 49.

> This country is fantastic now. . . . The feeling in the air is tremendous excitement. . . . Everything is young here, and I did not know how this could be, before now. Hope, creation, it is all wonderful. The galleries are full, the painting scene is fantastic. . . . The young people have taken over to a fantastic degree, literature, films, painting, everything. Of course, some of it is bad, but I have never felt so moved and changed in my whole life. (p. 68)

Who would dare suggest that Canada was a cultural wasteland in the face of a performance like this? Admittedly Harry does have an axe to grind, for he is trying to convince Shirley, who has never visited Canada, to abandon all and join him there. In spite of this qualification, the reversal in Harry's views about Canada, partially as a result of his temporary dislocation in England, is astounding.

A subdued version of this optimism about Canada's potential had been demonstrated while André and Harry were still in Europe. This new awareness had come about as a direct result of nostalgic musings about Canada. Once again, physical removal from the country had been the instigator of new insights. Harry reminds André of their discussions:

> We were homesick. We were trying to get back over the sea again and see this country. The voices talking on the long sidewalks at night under the trees, the

> village going to church in the morning and hearing the bells ringing and listening to the terrible sermons and the protest in our minds against the tiny thoughts and all the hatreds of this huge country. We said we would bring out our new ideas and make them work, and put the old ones away like shrunken heads. (pp. 56-7)

It is significant that in their optimism they did not eliminate the undesirable aspects of their experience. Their removal from the immediate scene merely enabled them to arrive at solutions to problems more readily, not to ignore those problems altogether.

Joseph Grand, the expatriate Canadian writer of travelogues who narrates Norman Levine's From a Seaside Town, also acknowledges a new awareness of Canada when he visits it after many years' residence at a seaside resort town in Cornwall, England. He admits quite early in the novel that he had moved to England to forget about Canada.[7] This action was as unsuccessful as his attempt to forget about his Jewishness by marrying an English girl. Joseph is constantly trying to escape from his past; he even admits to changing details of his background because he didn't like them. (p. 43)

He returns to Canada to prepare two articles for a travel magazine - one on Montreal, the other on the province of Quebec. He fully expects to feel depressed upon his arrival, but is pleasantly surprised to find himself experiencing a muted form of the opposite reaction:

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[7] Norman Levine, From a Seaside Town (Toronto, 1970), p. 44.

> I was returning to a country I find sad and, after a few weeks, feel isolated in. Yet watching Montreal in the snow appearing under the port wing, then on the walk to the airport building, tasting the cold air, then the drive in the taxi, seeing familiar frozen streets, gave me a kind of happiness. (p. 134)

Later, while returning by train to Montreal after a brief trip to Ottawa, Grand (who in many ways is a thinly disguised Norman Levine, as confirmed by the parallels between this book and Levine's autobiographical work, Canada Made Me[8]) recounts the enigma created by this new awareness of some of the positive values of Canada: he can no longer justify rationally why he continues to live in England:

> And next morning, on the train to Montreal, passing through the suburbs . . . the neat white streets, the comfortable wooden houses with blue roofs, icicles on the sides, snow on the lawns . . . [I was reminded that] I had run away from this, yet I found I envied the man who lived here. The steady job, the regular income, kids going to the schools one went to. One could have a stake here. . . . Why can't I settle for this? Why isolate myself in a cut-off seaside town in England, that I don't even like?(pp. 149-50)

In a footnote to this passage, Joseph admits that subconscious longings for Canada were present shortly after his first arrival in England, in spite of travel articles that would have left precisely the opposite impression:

> I remember the early travel articles about Canada that I wrote in England. I wrote about the violence, the mediocrity of the people, the provincialism, the dullness . . . And all the time I wanted to be there. (p. 150)

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[8] London: Putnam and Co. Ltd., 1958.

An interview with a Canadian academic who was writing an article about Grand's work serves as a painful reminder to the latter of the kind of mentality that had motivated his original move to England. In a rather convincing way it demonstrates that this new understanding of some of the positive aspects of Canada did not completely obliterate the earlier awareness he had had of this country's limitations. Notable also is the snide warning about the danger inherent in oversimplifying the very issue I am discussing, and adopting cant phrases to describe it:

> He [the Canadian academic] was very neat, very correct. I suddenly felt a little envious of him. He was a Canadian of three generations. He was older than the country. We didn't have much in common. "Mr. Grand. Do you come for a renewal of roots?" He was, he looked, firmly rooted here. But at the same time it produced this shallow looking individual, provincial, innocent. "Why do so many of our writers live out of Canada?" he asked. "I don't know," I said. "People leave for personal reasons."(p. 146)

Grand eventually leaves for England with little prospect of ever again returning to Canada. His decision is not the product of careful reflection or deep soul-searching. His reasons are mundanely personal: his English wife would never consent to live in Canada, and he abhors the prospect of being a Canadian Jew. The effect on the reader is anything but illuminating, but I suspect Levine intended it this way. It provides a helpful additional dimension to this discussion, however, for it demonstrates that Canada's expatriates often do not have clearly-thought-out reasons for leaving the country. As Jonathan Swift so forcefully pointed out, man is not a rational animal; he is only an animal capable of reason. There is an immense difference.

Jake Hersh, the Canadian film director protagonist of Mordecai Richler's _St_. _Urbain's_ _Horseman_, has moved to London to pursue his trade. Like other artists and writers that I have been examining, Hersh has always maintained an attitude of scorn for things Canadian, but a sense of awe for things English, or more particularly, Londonish. The inevitable disillusionment with the London artistic scene ensues shortly thereafter, and Hersh finds himself in a state of psychological limbo. He eventually realizes that Canada had been the scapegoat for all his personal frustrations:

> Slowly, inexorably, he was being forced to pay the price of the colonial come to the capital. In the provinces, he had been able to revere London and its offerings with impunity. Fulminating in Montreal, he could agree with Auden that the dominions were _tiefste Provinz_. Scornful of all things home-baked, he was at one with Dr. Johnson, finding his country a cold and uninviting region. As his father had blamed the _goyim_ for his own inadequacies, mentally billing them for the sum of his misfortunes, so Jake had foolishly held Canada culpable for all his discontents. Coming to London, finding it considerably less than excellent, he was at once deprived of this security blanket. The more he achieved, feeding the tapeworm of his outer ambitions, the larger his inner hunger.[9]

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[9] Mordecai Richler, _St_. _Urbain's_ _Horseman_ (Toronto, 1971), p. 281.

What Jake has really discovered is that provincialism, narrowness, boredom, and frustration are universal human experiences. No single country is a haven for artists, film directors, or anyone else, for that matter. Talent is sometimes recognized for its own sake, but not always so. Human limitations are global, not national.

When Jake has reason to return to Montreal briefly on the occasion of his father's funeral, he like Joseph Grand expects the worst. He too is pleasantly surprised by the sense of harmony and security he feels, even in the presence of his Jewish relations, although I sense a subsurface tone of irony in the following authorial expatiation - a patronizing tone which has recognized that security can rest on naivety and provincialism as much as on a love of order. It does seem clear however that Jake finds Montreal, with its down-to-earth values and orderliness, a refreshing change from London:

> He felt cradled, not deprived. He also felt like Rip van Winkle returned to an innocent and ordered world he had mistakenly believed long extinct. Where God watched over all, doing His sums. Where everything fit. . . . Where to say, "Gentlemen, the Queen," was to offer the obligatory toast to Elizabeth II at an affair, not to begin a discussion on Andy Warhol. Where smack was not habit-forming, but what a disrespectful child deserved; pot was what you simmered the chicken soup in; and camp was where you sent the boys for the summer. It was astounding, Jake was incredulous, that after so many years and fevers, after Dachau, after Hiroshima, revolution, rockets in space, DNA, bestiality in the streets, assassinations in and out of season, there were still brides with shining faces who were married in white gowns. . . . There were aunts who sold raffles and uncles who swore by the

> Reader's Digest. . . . They were ignorant of the arts, they were overdressed, they were overstuffed, and their taste was appallingly bad. ,But within their self-contained world, there was order. It worked. (pp. 371-2)

I would contend that the narrator is suggesting that this world is too self-contained, too untouched by the misery of mankind. Conformity can be an evidence of bland thoughtlessness as well as an effect of self-discipline. When the time comes for Jake to return to England, he is glad to get away. It is interesting, incidentally, that he never attempts to distinguish between the atmosphere among his Montreal relatives and the cultural climate of Canada as a whole. Perhaps this is another instance of the Canadian penchant for synecdoche - taking the part for the whole.

I wish to conclude this discussion of how the Canadian proclivity for travel abroad sheds light on our national identity by discussing briefly John Reid's novel, Horses With Blindfolds. The story is about Harold Windsor, a rather conservative Canadian businessman, who is spending a brief vacation by himself in Spain, where he has come to forget temporarily both his past and present circumstances. The novel is notable as far as our immediate topic is concerned for the several encounters Windsor has with people who show an abysmal ignorance about Canada. The image that emerges is that foreigners consider Canada to be a barely-tamed country where survival is a matter of constant concern. Ingrid Jarlson, Hal's Swedish neighbour, clearly manifests such a misconception when she remarks, "You must have many childrens in Canada because you must make fight with animals . . . you must make fight with forest - make houses - make food. . . ."[10] Again, at a cocktail party a French woman asks Windsor how they handled the bears in Canada. The hostess, interrupting, blithely replies that they are controlled by "The North-West Mounted Police." In considerate Canadian fashion Hal, anxious not to expose their ignorance, quietly asserts that he hasn't seen a bear in years. (p. 116)

The revelation of such misapprehension about Canada on the part of others does little to strengthen Hal's self-image. It takes his English daughter-in-law Elinor, who comes over to Spain to visit with him for a few days, to give him a greater degree of self-awareness than when he left Canada. When he objects to her blunt revelation that his son Charles had contracted dysentry from drinking Spanish water, Elinor responds, "Is it Canadian not to face facts, or does it merely run in your family? I really want to know." (p. 103) Later, at a Spanish bullfight, a crass American woman explains to her two children that the goring of the horses by the bull is mitigated by the fact that the horses wear blindfolds, and thus don't really know what is happening.(p. 157) Both incidents reveal to Windsor the fact that the unpleasant facts of life will not go away through self-willed blindness. Instead, they must be faced squarely and overcome. The effects of this discovery are apparent in Windsor's attitude as he prepares to return to Toronto:

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[10] John Reid, Horses With Blindfolds (Don Mills, Ont., 1968), p. 33.

> Each new day had said to him: all this hustle at home is vain. . . . And yet he was going back . . . . He wanted to do his daily job again, without heroics, because it was there; he would become its prisoner once more, he would go out again to meet the tedious routine and the fights. . . .(p. 200)

His trip of escapism abroad had thus taught him to do the opposite: to face life squarely, and thus eliminate the escapist motive that seems to be one important factor responsible for prompting the widespread Canadian yearning to journey or even live abroad.

PART IV - CANADIAN IDENTITY IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

XI. The Expiration of Adolescence: Paradoxical Elements in Canada's Relation to Britain

Sophie Bryant in her definition of "nationality" asserts that "a nation becomes what it is, and thus defines the character of its nationality, partly by action and reaction between it and others. . . ."[1] Thus far in this study I have discussed components of the Canadian identity which arise from Canada's internal or domestic circumstances - Canada, in effect, looking inwards. I wish to turn now to an assessment of the way recent Canadian writers have transmitted aspects of national identity by looking outwards - at this "action and reaction" to the two countries that have had the greatest determining effect on that identity: Britain and the United States. I shall conclude this section with an examination of how Canadian writers portray African nationalism, an interest which obviously has had little influence on the formation of Canadian identity, but rather which has provided an occasion for its expression.

The ambiguities that arise in Canada's current relation to Britain are a direct product of the vagaries of history. As pointed out earlier in this study, Canada's metamorphosis from colony to nation was accomplished by evolution rather than revolution. As a result, most of our political, legal, and social institutions are based deliberately on antecedents in Great Britain. In addition, many of our values and freedoms emanate from this unbroken link with the mother country.

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[1] Sophie Bryant, "Nationality," in James Hastings, ed., _Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics_, 1967, IX, 192.

Because the assumption of nationhood entailed the preservation of the old as much as the establishment of the new, Canadians have always had difficulty in comprehending fully the nature of their constantly changing relationship with Britain, much less making other nations, including Britain itself, understand. There are the firm ties of crown, constitution, and institutional similarities which do not seem to allow for much alteration. At the same time, as the position of Britain in world affairs wanes and the power and influence of the United States increases, some writers advocate with more urgency than ever that Canada strike an independent and unencumbered position in international relations. Yet Canada is caught in the embarrassing dilemma of claiming to have cut all ties of obligation and subordinacy to the mother country, while at the same time preserving in her most vital institutions the clear evidence of her continuing indebtedness to that nation.

In this chapter I deal almost exclusively with Canadian emotional responses to Britain as expressed in recent fiction. These cover a remarkable range, verifying the ambiguities I just mentioned. To some, the British retention of an attitude of colonial superiority to Canada makes Britain an object only of contempt. Such attitudes are expressed by characters in Bacque's *Big Lonely*, Davies' *The Manticore*, Atwood's *The Edible Woman*, and Godfrey's *No Englishman Need Apply*. Other novelists portray characters who are so unaware of any sense of national obligation to England that they presume the mother country to be somewhat backward and in need of pity rather than censure. Such feelings are expressed by characters in Moore's *I Am Mary Dunne* and Levine's *From a Seaside Town*. Still others, however, maintain an unbounded sense of indebtedness and, indeed, outright inferiority towards matters English. The viability of such reactions is treated in Charters *Victor Victim*, Clarkson's *Hunger Trace*, Richler's *St. Urbain's Horseman*, Davies' *The Manticore*, and Sutherland's *Lark des Neiges*.

Clearly no homogeneity of response to Britain is therefore identifiable in Canada. My point in this chapter is not that a sense of the Canadian identity is to be found in a shared response to this issue of Canada's relation to Britain, but in the fact that this topic is itself sufficiently important in the consciousness of this nation of people who have willed to live together that it arouses such responses in the first place.

Britain Resented

One of the things that contemporary Canadians, especially the young, most resent is being thought of still as subjects in a British colony. There is a marvellous exchange in Big Lonely that demonstrates in a very entertaining way the Canadian disdain for the persistence of such condescension. Harry Summers, the Canadian painter, is being introduced by Jack, a casual acquaintance from the B.B.C., to Jack's friend Mordecai at an English cocktail party:

> [Jack] Mordecai, this is Harry Summers from Australia [Jack tends to lump all colonials together, so identification of the correct colony is not particularly important].
> [Harry] How do you do, Mordecai.
> [Mordecai] From Australia? Very pleased, I'm sure. What part?
> [Harry] Winnipeg.
> [Mordecai] Of course, is that New South . . . ?
> [Harry] Yes.[2]

The retention of a colonial attitude to Canadians is similarly demonstrated by David Staunton's Oxford tutor in The Manticore. David sarcastically observes:

> Pargetter was determined that I should not be what he called an ignorant pettifogger, and he made it clear that as a Canadian I started well behind scratch in the journey toward professional literary elegance."[3]

Resentment towards such arrogance occasionally takes the form of Canadians' very conscious rejection of anything that could be construed to involve a retention of English taste or mannerisms. A Toronto restaurant in The Edible Woman is dismissed as "one with old-world English pretensions."[4] Shortly thereafter Massey College on the University of Toronto campus is referred to as "that new pseudo-British joint with the coat of arms and the monastery wall." Both designations are clearly meant to be uncomplimentary.

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[2] James Bacque, Big Lonely (Toronto, 1971), p. 14.

[3] Robertson Davies, The Manticore (Toronto, 1972), p. 203.

The propensity for Canadians to expect British immigrants to abandon their English mannerisms is another evidence of this desire to eliminate all vestiges of colonial servitude from Canadian experience. Retention of these mannerisms somehow automatically arouses a Canadian's inferiority complex - the feeling that one is "bush league" and traditionless. Denis Godfrey seems to have this customary Canadian reaction in mind when he describes Philip Brent as possessing the traits of the standard English academic: ". . . that English ease of manner, with its hint of condescension . . . that clear, authoritative English accent. . . ."[5] Later, at Philip's first Department of English meeting at Marston University, Professor Broddick, also originally from England, admires the effect of that

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[4] Margaret Atwood, The Edible Woman (Toronto, 1969), p. 111.

[5] Denis Godfrey, No Englishman Need Apply (Toronto, 1965), p. 10.

English superiority complex in action:

> It was the voice, of course, that oh-so-precise, so-well-modulated English voice, that unselfconscious ring of cool authority! After so many Canadian years, the Professor could react to it as they [the other professors of English literature] did, could sense in them that curious spellbound mingling of envy and dislike. (p. 77)

As it turns out, Brent deserves some of the ill treatment he receives during the course of the novel, for he demonstrates, at least at first, a good deal of British arrogance. For example, he makes fun of the overwhelming hospitality of Canadians as follows:

> Of course they're hospitable. . . . It's in the great Canadian tradition. If they didn't lend you plates and dishes and stuff you with food, they'd be letting the side down. The least we can do is play up to them. (p. 15)

He goes on to warn his wife:

> And don't kid yourself: don't imagine because of all this hospitality, tea-parties and blankets and so forth, that we're really liked. We're English, and they don't much care for English people in western Canada. (p. 17)

The irony is that Philip seems totally unaware of the contribution his air of condescension makes to that animosity. Mrs. Broddick demonstrates the same patronizing attitude, which accounts for her inability to adapt to the Canadian situation after twenty-four years of residence, when explaining to Lucy the Canadian post-colonial mentality:

> They don't need us any longer, don't want us. It's all got to be done their way from now on, without any help from us. Even if it's the wrong way. So leave them to it. (p. 206)

Sometimes the Canadian attempt to sever ties of obligation to England are expressed by the Canadian adoption of this condescending attitude: Canadians themselves look upon England as rather obsolete and backward. Often these ideas are based on hearsay evidence only - the case with Ernie Truelove, erstwhile admirer of the narrator in Moore's I Am Mary Dunne. He blandly pontificates on England's problems with the class system, and decries the substandard calibre of their food, although he calmly admits that he has never been to England.[6] Oscar and Mona, the brother-in-law and sister of the narrator, Joseph Grand, in Levine's From a Seaside Town, possess similar uncomplimentary preconceptions of England when they come to Cornwall from Meredian, Ontario, for a visit. They bring along their own instant coffee because they had heard that good coffee was not to be had in England. They also express surprise that the hamburgers that Emily, Joseph's English wife, makes for them taste so good - just "like we make them."[7] Fortunately, they had not brought along their own meat too!

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[6] Brian Moore, I Am Mary Dunne (Toronto, 1968), p. 181.

[7] Norman Levine, From a Seaside Town (Toronto, 1970), p. 77.

Britain Extolled

It would be leaving entirely the wrong impression, however, to suggest that the attitude to Britain, even in recent years, is uniformly negative. Outsiders, particularly Americans, have always found it difficult to account for the persistent sense of allegiance to the mother country felt by the majority of Canadians throughout this country's history. W. L. Morton explains that Americans have always taken it for granted that any colony would bend every effort to throw off the yoke of imperialist tyranny; moreover, they assumed that as soon as this happened in Canada's case, this neighbour of America would rush into the security of political union with the U.S.A. at the earliest possible moment.[8] That neither event has occurred is a great enigma to most Americans. Professor Lower includes in his social history of Canada an interesting excerpt from an 1874 novel by William Dean Howells entitled Their Wedding Journey which superbly demonstrates how absurd to an outsider the preservation of Canada's allegiance to Britain seemed:

> . . . its overweening loyalty placed a great country like Canada in a very silly attitude, the attitude of an overgrown, unmanly boy, clinging to the maternal skirts, and though spoilt and wilful, without any character of his own. The constant reference of local hopes to that remote center beyond the seas, the test of success by the criterions of a necessarily different

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[8] W. L. Morton, The Canadian Identity (Toronto, 1972), p. 58.

> civilization . . . gave an effect of meanness to the whole fabric.[9]

At times this sense of allegiance to Britain is undoubtedly evidence of some Canadians' refusal to abandon their colonial mentality. Contrary to Vincent Massey's declaration twenty-five years ago that "The 'colonial' point of view no longer exists as a factor in our national life and is held by no thinking Canadian,"[10] recent Canadian writers continue to see this as a notable element in the consciousness of some. The British narrator in Charters' Victor Victim considers the maintenance of allegiance to England by Canadians to be equally as inappropriate as the teaching of a similar loyalty to Scottish school children:

> "O Peaceful England." I don't suppose you'd know that song? We learned it for a music festival at school, though God knows why Glasgow kids should have had such tub-thumping English chauvinism forced down their throats. It's the same here [in Canada]; I know a man who flies the Red Ensign and wears an old-school tie, and he's not even a Conservative.[11]

Regina Adler's father in Clarkson's Hunger Trace demonstrates how this colonialist contempt for Canada can be acquired even by a European immigrant. Although he had migrated from Europe to the Canadian prairies in 1933,

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[9] W. D. Howells, quoted in A. R. M. Lower, Canadians in the Making (Toronto, 1958), p. 301.

[10] Vincent Massey, On Being Canadian (Toronto, 1948), p. 19.

[11] Michael Charters, Victor Victim (Toronto, 1970), p. 119.

Regina relates that "My father has always behaved as though he didn't know he was in Canada; England had been his first choice and he purported never to have understood how he got to Canada in the first place."[12]

The best evidence of this sense of colony-like inferiority is portrayed in Richler's St. Urbain's Horseman, however. Jake Hersh and Luke Scott, both Canadian film script writers, look upon acceptance in both New York and London as the essential criterion of their success. Indeed, when working initially in Canada, they had considered good Toronto reviews of their artistic efforts to be a stigma.[13] The colonial's sense of inferiority is transmitted in a subsequent authorial explanation:

> Jake, Luke, and others of their generation were reared to believe in the cultural thinness of their own blood. Anemia was their heritage. . . . Their only certitude was that all indigenous cultural standards they had been raised on were a shared joke. No national reputation could be bandied abroad without apology.(p. 182)

Richler communicates his awareness of how inappropriate this attitude towards things Canadian was when he adds, "What they failed to grasp was the ironic truth in Sir Wilfred Laurier's boast that the twentieth century would belong to Canada." Richler's failure to explain his precise attitude to this somewhat excessive prediction, however, leaves the reader in some doubt as to whether the author is serious as to the inappropriateness of Jake and Luke's outlook, for anyone familiar with Richler's non-fictional writing and public remarks knows that he himself has held such views towards things Canadian in the past.

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[12] Adrienne Clarkson, Hunger Trace, (Toronto, 1970), p. 169.

[13] Mordecai Richler, St. Urbain's Horseman (Toronto, 1971), p. 156.

This colonial inferiority is seen in action when Luke's play is accepted by a London production company. Jake was just becoming a reasonably successful director at this time, but despite Luke's recognition of Jake's talents, as well as the fact that they both saw very much eye to eye on dramatic matters, he inwardly hoped that Jake would not accept his dutiful proposal that he direct his new play. The narrator explains:

> . . . given his first big chance for a breakthrough, unsettled by enormous self-doubts, he [Luke] yearned for the reassurance of somebody unknown to him. A reputation. Somebody real, somebody British. (p. 183)

Jake reciprocates this attitude when he diplomatically turns down Luke's offer. The omniscient narrator reveals that Jake was secretly surprised that Luke's play, being Canadian, had been considered by Royal Court to be good enough to produce. Jake is also relieved that his first major directing effort will not be a Canadian play!

Loyalty to England by Canadians is not always portrayed as a thoughtless perpetuation of colonialism, however. It can also be an honest recognition of where many of this nation's ideological and institutional roots lie. David Staunton in The Manticore manifests such an awareness when he justifies the existence of the Governor-General and Lieutenant-Governors in Canada:

> Silly people smile at these ceremonial offices because they don't understand them. You can't have a parliamentary system without these official figures who represent the state, the Crown, the whole body of government, as well as the elected fellows who represent the voters. (p. 25)

Later in the novel, David provides a new angle on Canadian loyalty to England by remarking that in his father's case, it was a form of romantic escape from the rather dull existence he was leading, a phenomenon described in the previous chapter on expatriates:

> My father's admiration for whatever was English was one aspect of the ambiguous relationship between Canada and England. I suppose unkind people would say it was evidence of a colonial quality of mind, but I think it was the form taken by his romanticism. There was something terribly stuffy about Canada in my boyhood - a want of daring and great dimension, a second-handedness in cultural matters, a frowsy old-woman quality - that got on his nerves. (p. 98)

David's explanation points out an important factor in this sense of loyalty to Britain, and that is that it seems to have been retained primarily by members of the older generation. The young seem far more ready to abandon such feelings.

The romantic escapism of this older generation's devotedness to England is also portrayed by Andrew MacDonald, the English-speaking father of the narrator in

Lark des Neiges, in the fact that he listens regularly to the B.B.C. news. He also dreams of taking his French-Canadian wife to England some day, asking her on one occasion, "Wouldn't you like to see the old country, maman?"[14] Her reply is immensely significant, for it demonstrates not only the great gulf between the value systems of English and French-speaking Canadians, but also how easily a normally legitimate sense of loyalty to this nation's mother country can blind one to Canada's latent potential for the future. Yvette replies, "Me? Seigneur! I doan got no hold country, ma belle. Me I'm from the new country."

Despite Canada's historical and institutional ties to Britain, the continuing diminution of the latter country's stature in world affairs, along with her loss of prestige in the Commonwealth because of her overwhelming domestic problems and her decision to join the European Common Market, it is becoming increasingly inexpedient for Canadians to define their identity in terms of this country's relation to Britain, at least in positive terms. The reduced importance of this relationship, up to very recently one of the chief devices for distinguishing Canadians from Americans, has a great deal to do with the crisis of identity that so many

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[14] Ronald Sutherland, Lark des Neiges (Toronto, 1971), p. 85.

Canadians are currently concerned about. But as we have already observed, the more that national identity is questioned or threatened, the greater the need to articulate it. Canadians on the whole will to be different from Americans. Some of the effects of the resultant ideological confrontation are described in the next chapter.

XII. The American Ubiquity: Catalyst to Canadian Unity

> Without at least a touch of anti-Americanism, Canada would have no reason to exist. Of all general definitions of the Canadians, this is the most nearly valid: twenty million people who, for anything up to twenty million reasons, prefer not to be Americans.[1]

Such an attitude towards our powerful neighbour to the South has unquestionably been one of the most durable and wide-spread elements in the Canadian consciousness and one of the most significant factors in counteracting the diversity of regional and racial loyalties that tend to undermine the development of a sense of national identity in this country. Historians such as Arthur Lower[2] and W. L. Morton[3] have done much to dispel the impression, created by the avalanche of books and magazine and newspaper articles on the subject that have appeared in recent years, much less the orations emanating from Walter Gordon, the N.D.P., and the Committee for an Independent Canada, among others, that this anti-Americanism is a phenomenon of recent origin. Lower, for example, points to the War of 1812 as one of the central building blocks for the Canadian nation because it created an anti-Americanism that not only unified the disparate settlements of Upper Canada, but also reduced the tensions between Upper and Lower Canada.(pp. 184-5) Morton points to such factors as the Alaska Boundary dispute of 1911 and the unpleasant reaction to American trainees temporarily resident in Canada during the Second World War as further contributors to the sense of disenchantment that often underlies Canadians' relations with their American neighbours.(pp. 69, 76)

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[1] Blair Fraser, The Search for Identity (New York, 1967), p. 301.

[2] In Canadians in the Making, Toronto: Longmans, Green and Company, 1958.

[3] In The Canadian Identity, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972.

Of even more crucial importance than these particular historical events in the creation of Canadian distrust of things American has been the pervasive influence of that country's cultural and economic institutions on the Canadian way of life. Because such characteristics as the love of the gadget-oriented good life, the preference for spectacle over involvement, the determination of value by quantitative rather than qualitative standards, the profit motive as the primary justification of any enterprise, and so on, are as thoroughly Canadian as they are American standards of value, such American institutions rarely encounter any appreciable opposition from the majority of Canadians.

The more widely the American influence is acknowledged in Canada, however, the more fervently Candians search for aspects of ostensible uniqueness that will distinguish Canadian society from American. Because of the Canadian fear of eventual absorption by the more populous and more powerful U.S.A., there is a tendency for these differences to be exaggerated in an attempt to play down the undeniable evidences of similarity. Indeed, the whole process at times seems to be on the verge of a national overkill, for any group requires only a single similarity to have group identity, and only a single difference to have an identity distinct from another, similar group.

Curiously enough, the American omnipresence has created an obstacle to the formulation of the Canadian identity as often as it has aroused an affirmation of that identity. The reason for this is that awareness of similarity between the two countries can produce two completely differing reactions: the Canadian can be unduly reticent to emphasize differences, especially when his value system has been so profoundly influenced by the American outlook that he tends to downgrade things Canadian anyhow; or he can make the most of differences that do in fact exist in order that total absorption of the country by its larger neighbour might be resisted.* Diminution of the real differences all too often occurs in the first case; in the second, exaggeration.

Happily, and in typical Canadian fashion, there is a middle road between these two extremes, and that is an awareness that while the United States affects our lives and values profoundly, and sometimes even for the better, there is a core of qualities in our national way of life that is uniquely Canadian. George Woodcock, in a review of Robert Fulford's Crisis at the Victory Burlesk which takes issue with that author's assertion that all English-speaking Canadians are essentially Americans, expresses this compromise as follows:

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* See H. F. Angus, ed., Canada and Her Great Neighbour (Toronto, 1938), p. 243 on this point.

> . . . there is a position outside the artificial polarity of American and anti-American, and this is where a good many of us in Canada - though apparently not Mr. Fulford - stand. I am conscious of not being an American, though I am a Canadian by birth. . . . Neither am I anti-American. I detest American politics as it is displayed in the present decade; I loathe some of the products of American mass culture. . . . Yet I still find many of my intellectual roots in American thought and American literature and American radical action. But this does not make me an American. . . . It does however make me a modern Canadian, citizen of a land where immigration has always been vital in ideals as well as people.[5]

Woodcock's remark is vital because it emphasizes one fact about national identity that is frequently overlooked - that although it is based primarily on the a priori assumption of existential preference by a group of people who will to live together under the aegis of an identifiable political entity ruling over a distinct geographical area, it often induces after the fact rationalizations of that preference which are frequently expressed in terms of difference from other nations. Once the volunteerist nature of national identity is recognized, inhibitions about affirming similarities to other nations are eliminated, as Woodcock's assertion demonstrates.

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[5] George Woodcock, "Playboys and Bunnies," Canadian Literature, No. 40 (Spring, 1969), pp. 81-2.

When two nations like Canada and the United States share so many values, are mutually dependent on one another economically, and live as next door neighbours on the richest continent on earth, it is only to be expected that articulation of national identity, particularly by the less significant of the two, should be expressed primarily in terms of difference. The nature of these differences is the primary topic of interest in most of the recent fictional portrayals of the United States by Canadian writers. In novels such as Scratch One Dreamer, The Last of the Crazy People, Watcha Gonna Do Boy . . . Watcha Gonna Be? and The Unmelting Pot, the case for there being little or no difference between Canadians and Americans is made. In some of these novels, such a realization produces silence about Canadian uniqueness; in others, it elicits articulation of difference that is clearly partly invention. In I Am Mary Dunne, The Meeting Point, Place d'Armes, No Englishman Need Apply and Surfacing, Canadian uniqueness is expressed in terms of moral or personal superiority. The antithesis of this view appears in Scratch One Dreamer, Lives of Girls and Women, Take Hands at Winter and St. Urbain's Horseman, where expressions of a Canadian inferiority complex reflect this nation's propensity to be overwhelmed at times with the American ubiquity.

The chapter ends with a consideration of the two results of the American presence that most concern Canadians: the American influence in Canada's cultural and economic life, and the possible future consequences for Canadians of the American determination to be the world's strongest military power.

Canada as Similar to the U.S.A.

Several recent novelists demonstrate that some Canadian assumptions about this nation's uniqueness in relation to the United States are products of contrivance and invention. In Scratch One Dreamer, David Lewis Stein shows how completely the economic well-being provided by the American developers of an Ontario mine influenced the Canadian workers to adopt the same values as their American overlords, even though the quantity of pecuniary reward was profoundly different:

> The American owners skimmed off the real wealth of the Deodar [name of the mine]. But the mine was so rich that there was enough left over to lift the miners into the middle class. They owned homes and television sets and cars. They had as big a stake in preserving order and the stability of society as the Americans in their oak-panelled New York offices.[6]

Formerly, the workers had shown great willingness to protest against social injustice, particularly when led by

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[6] David Lewis Stein, Scratch One Dreamer (Toronto, 1967), p. 72.

Leo Olano, the ex-Communist uncle of the protagonist, Joey Fried, who in his activist days had helped them organize a union. Now that their comfort had been guaranteed by the mine, they refused to upset the status quo by engaging in any form of social protest. The miners therefore reject Joey's invitation to become involved in the march objecting to the installation of Bomarc missiles at the nearby military base. The elevation of materialistic values to a position of ascendancy is an "American" propensity easily acquired by Canadians.

A rather uncomplimentary basis for similarity between the two countries is provided by Timothy Findley's _The Last of the Crazy People_, a portrayal of madness and violent death in a decaying southern Ontario family.[7] Passing remarks by the Negro maid, Iris Browne, make explicit these unflattering parallels. Her recurrent references to the folk song, "Frankie and Johnny," which describes the tragic love and demise of two black lovers, reinforces the central theme of death which pervades the novel, but the ironic twist comes when she asserts that the story could have taken place just as easily in Toronto as St. Louis.[8] Later, during a discussion of the assassination of President Kennedy, Iris deflates the Canadian propensity to condemn this act as an inevitable product of American violence by reminding her companions that Thomas Darcy McGee was the victim of an assassin also. The difference in Canada is that nobody can remember the assassin's name, quite unlike the States, where Booth and Oswald became famous overnight for their deeds. Iris concludes that McGee's murder must not have been very important "Or we'd know about it"(p. 71) - an ironic reference to the Canadian tendency to underrate the significance of this country's history.

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[7] A comparison with Faulkner is difficult to resist, as illustrated in J. M. Stedmond's review in "Letters in Canada: Fiction," _University of Toronto Quarterly_, 37 (July, 1968), 386.

[8] Timothy Findley, _The Last of the Crazy People_ (New York, 1967), p. 43.

A variation on this theme of similarity is introduced in Peter Taylor's _Watcha Gonna Do Boy . . . Watcha Gonna Be?_ Peter William, the first-person narrator, justifies his very self-conscious writing of the book by asserting that American members of the Beat Generation were writing about the same kind of experiences he and his companion were having - experiences that would remain unknown unless he documented them:

> For this is the year of Kerouac and the Beat Generation, and Jim and I, having read one or two books by one or two of these mad boy men, had decided earlier this same summer that since the young men of America were getting so much praise about and for so many of the things we were doing ourselves right here in backwoods New Brunswick, we too would write books about it all.[9]

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[9] Peter Taylor, _Watcha Gonna Do Boy . . . Watcha Gonna Be?_ (Toronto, 1967), p. 45.

This remark is unusual because of its uncritical assumption that "Anything the Americans can do, we can do just as well, if not better." Also, there seems to be no question in their minds that their experiences are virtually the same as those of their American counterparts. The assumption seems to be that there is little or no difference between Main Street America and backwoods New Brunswick. Paradoxically, claims of similarity between Canadians and Americans can sound as contrived as assertions of difference.

Old Heinz, that dispeller of illusions in Sheldon's *The Unmelting Pot*, chides Stephen Wiener for his lack of perception in thinking that there was any significant difference between Canadians and Americans:

> You seem to believe this country can be independent of the States. That is childish. A man whose family came here a hundred and fifty years ago because they did not like Yankee ideas, he is entitled to this folly. But a good European like you should see clearly.[10]

Stephen makes a very significant remark in reply when he points out that the difference between the inhabitants of the two countries exists primarily on the ideational level: "I like the idea of a separate Canada. The idea that Canadians are a different people, with their own ideals, a distinct attitude to life."(p. 18) He reinforces this view a short while later: "There is a difference . . . because the people who live here wish there to be a difference. . . ."(p. 19)

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[10] Michael Sheldon, *The Unmelting Pot* (London, 1965), p. 17.

Stephen's remarks go right to the crux of the whole issue of national identity, for as I have been trying to demonstrate in this study, national identity is largely the after the fact rationalization of a voluntary and wilful a priori determination. National identity exists volitionally first of all; it is from that context that attempts are later made to describe the qualities of that identity in consistent and rational terms, but a sense of identity is not necessarily dependent upon the viability of such descriptions.

Stephen doesn't go into any great detail at this point to specify the nature of these dissimilarities. He does suggest that the traditions are different, to which Heinz responds that the Queen and parliamentary government are superficialities, thereby consigning to the flames his trustworthiness as an analyst of the Canadian situation.

Sheldon demonstrates his impatience with those who would suggest that the difference resides in the American monopoly of a crassly materialistic outlook on life by means of his satirical portrayal of Halliday Brown, the ardent Canadian nationalist who speaks to the Women for Canada conference. The author scornfully remarks that Brown ". . . spent most of his time denouncing American magazines, pocket books and television. It was up to the women of

Canada to oppose these pernicious influences, and develop a truly national culture - for the men were too busy making money."(p. 135) The last clause effectively cancels the effect of the entire tirade, for such supposedly pernicious cultural influences can in no way threaten a society whose male population is so thoroughly dedicated to the pursuit of affluence.

Canada as Different from the U.S.A.

This presumed moral superiority to the Americans is portrayed sufficiently often in recent Canadian fiction to confirm it as a widely-practiced Canadian method of counteracting the feeling of inferiority aroused by the American ubiquity. In almost every case this assumption is shown to be the consequence of naivety or moral blindness. Harry Blodgetts, the loquacious but virtually incoherent Toronto landlord of the narrator in Moore's _I Am Mary Dunne_, expresses this superiority complex as follows:

> This bloody country, I tell you, this _is_ democracy, God's own bloody country, I say, and don't tell me the States, don't tell me the frigging Yanks are as good as we are, the frigging Yanks, I tell you I've been in Buffalo, I like people better. . . .[11]

Because the landlord's experience of Americans is hardly broad enough to justify his supposition, the credibility of this assessment is placed seriously in doubt.

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[11] Brian Moore, _I Am Mary Dunne_ (Toronto, 1968), p. 127.

A similar assumption of moral superiority is expressed by Mrs. Burrmann, the Jewish employer of Bernice Leach in The Meeting Point. I indicated in the chapter on immigrant experiences in Canada the very clear evidence provided by Clarke of racial prejudice against blacks in Toronto. Mrs. Burrmann, shielded from any direct encounter with this intolerance, perpetuates the myth that it doesn't exist in this country when she exclaims, in response to a news report that Martin Luther King was leading a protest march to Washington, "Praise God, it doesn't happen here. . . . We're even better than Britain."[12]

In Chapter III I discussed Scott Symons' condemnation in Place d'Armes of what he considered to be the typical English-Canadian life-style. He does concede however that this stereotyped Canadian is a drastic improvement on his American counterpart; he communicates this distinction by portraying Anglo-Canadians as "cubes" but "Amurricans" as "squares" - the former having more substance than the latter, who are two-dimensional and superficial:

> Cubes have it: earnest, composed substantial . . . and with more significance, more mass, more organic matter than any simple Square, high or low. The Square

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[12] Austin C. Clarke, The Meeting Point (Toronto, 1967), p. 12.

> being finally a paperweight in comparison with these Canadian-English. . . .[13]

It is significant that not a single American appears in Symons' novel to substantiate this assumption about American superficiality. Once again it is clear that a process of rationalization is operating whereby distinctive national characteristics are established which are for the most part invented, or more precisely, unverified.

Denis Godfrey in No Englishman Need Apply introduces a rather interesting angle into this whole question of Canada's assumed moral superiority to the United States when he has the English academic Philip Brent discover to his surprise that his American colleagues envy him his position at Marston University in Western Canada when he goes to New York to investigate the prospects of securing a job there. Philip's discovery that the calibre of university education and teaching conditions in the United States are less than ideal causes him to assess the conditions at Marston in an entirely new light. He expresses his disillusion on this latter point to his wife Lucy:

> Those people down there . . . they don't really care for literature as such, don't really respect it. It's something . . . in the reality of which they don't really believe. All they want is to dissect it, see

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[13] Scott Symons, Place d'Armes (Toronto, 1967), p. 60.

> how many facts they can break it down into for their own clever little purposes.[14]

A rather amusing episode lampooning the Canadian tendency to express their presumed moral superiority to the Americans by blaming them for the ills of Canadian society is recounted in Margaret Atwood's Surfacing. David, one of the party of three who accompany the young narrator to a secluded lake in northern Quebec to look for her missing father, responds to the beauty and solitude of the natural surroundings by remarking, "If we could only kick out the fascist pig Yanks and the capitalists this would be a neat country. But then, who would be left?"[15] Later, when two fishermen invade their solitude, they are automatically assumed to be Americans out to exploit Canada's resources and blight Canada's environment. The ire of the four young people is further incited by their discovery of a heron that has been senselessly killed by the two invaders.

The two fishermen turn out to be Canadians, who had similarly assumed that the four of them were Americans because of their long hair and generally unkempt appearance! (p. 129) This thoughtless assignation of people to what turns out to be a spurious national category is Atwood's way of ironically exposing the human propensity to make judgements about others on the basis of superficial qualities of appearance or behaviour.

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[14] Denis Godfrey, No Englishman Need Apply (Toronto, 1965), p. 165.

[15] Margaret Atwood, Surfacing (Toronto, 1972), p. 39.

The shoe is placed on the other foot, as it were, by several works of fiction in which Canadians assume themselves to be inferior to Americans. Interestingly enough, the inferiority is never expressed in ethical terms. Rather, it has to do with qualities of leadership, or ability to live life with flair and gusto. Stein conveys this feeling of Canadian inadequacy in Scratch One Dreamer, for example, when the group of young dissenters secretly desires Chester Brock, the American protest organizer who had refused to act as a marshall during the peace demonstration at the Bomarc missile base for fear the press would take it as another form of anti-imperialism, to be telling them what to do, for "They still looked to the American, the Big Brother."(p. 142)

Another instance of this feeling of inferiority aroused by the American presence is described in the episode entitled "Princess Ida" in Alice Munro's Lives of Girls and Women. The narrator's Uncle Bill Morrison and his newly-acquired second wife Aunt Nile come from Ohio for a visit to the small town of Jubilee, Ontario. Uncle Bill, from the time his big cream and chocolate-coloured car drives up to the house, completely sweeps Del off her feet by demonstrations of "idiot largesse, which threw the whole known system of rewards and delights out of kilter."[16] He virtually buys out the small general store and the local bakery, or so it seems to Del. There appears to be no limit to his awesome financial resources.

As a result, Del's perception of the familiar is completely disoriented. Earlier in the story, she had remarked favourably on "the order, the wholeness, the intricate arrangement" of life in her small home town. (p. 70) Now, she asserts, "Jubilee seemed not unique and permanent as I had thought but almost makeshift, and shabby; it would barely do."(pp. 84-5)

This feeling of inadequacy is augmented by the very evident discomfiture of Aunt Nile, whom Del describes as looking "amazed and unhappy as someone who had never even heard of foreign countries, and who is suddenly whisked away and deposited in one, with everybody around speaking an undreamt-of language. Adaptability could not be one of her strong points."(p. 83) Her excessive artificiality seems perfection itself to Del at the time, right down to the green fingernails that match Aunt Nile's clothes.

Several days after their departure Del's mother reveals that Uncle Bill is dying of cancer. Thus his exhuberant generosity in the presence of Del, which aroused in her such an acute feeling of inadequacy, is shown to be in fact a demonstration of rare courage - a final indication of his regard in the light of his imminent death.

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[16] Alice Munro, Lives of Girls and Women (Toronto, 1971), p. 86.

The Canadian inferiority complex is shown to derive from an awareness of America's extensive size and overwhelming power by Jeff Loder, the Canadian nationalist in John Peter's Take Hands at Winter. Speaking to David Gilpin, a recent immigrant from England, about the reasons for Canadian antipathy towards Americans, Loder explains:

> We're little, boy, that's what it really comes down to, and all the time we're trying to persuade ourselves we're up in the same league with the States. It eats the hell out of us, this goddamn proximity. Every day you'll hear some patriot complaining that Americans don't study us as attentively as we study them. Jesus, why should they? But we brood over it, we drive ourselves crazy thinking about it. Damn it, can you think of a better way of fostering an inferiority complex?[17]

At times this sense of inferiority is demonstrated by a wholesale adoption of American values and standards, and a consequent belittling of things Canadian. Mordecai Richler shows this propensity among the Montreal Jewish community in St. Urbain's Horseman. Jake Hersh, the protagonist, recalls how the Jews regularly took their vacations in the Catskills or Miami, never in Canada. Whenever they were sick they automatically went to the Mayo Clinic at Rochester. Jake recalls how early in World War I, his parents and relatives used to sit around cracking peanuts on a Friday night,

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[17] John Peter, Take Hands at Winter (Garden City, N.Y., 1967), pp. 69-70.

> . . . waiting for the United States, for those two unequalled champions of their people, Roosevelt and Walter Winchell, to come off it and get into the war. They admired the British, they were gutsy, but they had more confidence in the U. S. Marines.[18]

Their adoption of the American outlook on life was so thorough that their attitude to Canada was as indifferent as that of the Americans:

> Ottawa? Quebec City? Those were bush league towns where you went to pay off a government goy for a contract or a building permit. They were the places the regulations came from, not life's joys. (p. 97)

Jake reveals his adoption of these values when he expresses his desire to go to New York in order to acquire the ability to direct films. It doesn't even enter his mind to pursue such a career in Canada. As it turns out, he and his fellow film script writer, Luke, end up in London. After Luke visits New York for eight days to discuss the Broadway version of his play, he confirms the strong earlier indication that New York, and not Toronto or Montreal, is their spiritual home. He tells Jake, "In the end, we're Americans, you know. You wouldn't feel like a foreigner there" (p. 191) - a significant remark, for Jake feels very much like a stranger in London.

This unconscious, uncritical adoption of American values is shown to be ironically worthless when Jake is refused entry to the U.S.A. on the very skimpy evidence that his presence would be prejudicial to the interests of the American people (The word had gotten out that he had been a member of the Progressive Book Club in university). Salt is rubbed into the wound to Jake's self-esteem by the very naive and incredibly unaware young man who is commissioned to escort him back to the Canadian border. He effervesces:

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[18] Mordecai Richler, St. Urbain's Horseman (Toronto, 1971), p. 97.

> Say, I must tell you how much I admire things Canadian. In our house, we always listen to the CBC. It doesn't insult your intelligence, if you know what I mean? They allow for nonconformists. (p. 107)

The irony is that the young man clearly assumes all such nonconformists, among whom Jake is included, to be Communists, and therefore anathema to the interests of the United States.

Canadian Fears of American Domination

Undoubtedly the two effects of the American ubiquity that concern Canada the most are (1) the degree and quality of American input into Canada's economic and cultural life, and (2) the deleterious effects on Canada of the United States' role as the world's greatest military superpower. I propose to end this chapter with an examination of several novels and short stories that deal with these two topics.

One writer who has made no secret of his objection to the American influence in Canadian cultural and economic life is Dave Godfrey. Indeed, he has described his concern that a stop be put to this encroachment as one of the main motives for his literary efforts:

> I don't like what's happening in the States: it seems to me that they have identified and propounded a kind of . . . economic nationalism, whose design, stated or not, is to impose this mold upon the whole world. . . . [My anti-American sentiment is] not necessarily nationalism. I would be quite happy to see less nationalism in the world, to see Canada without an identity as long as it's not a matter of giving up a beaver skin for a tiger skin. It's a sort of "anti-identity" thing because I want to see what we've got here and I don't want it to be what they've got in the States.[19]

Note again the emphasis on national identity as qualities which are willed into existence by the observer. Godfrey displays an a priori determination that Canada will be different from the United States. Whether in actuality it is or not is of lesser importance.

A most effective examination of the nature of capitalist America's exploitation of Canadian resources is to be found in Godfrey's short story, "The Hard-Headed Collector," in his collection entitled Death Goes Better With Coca-Cola. The story demonstrates Godfrey's propensity for innovation and experimentation, and his obvious unwillingness to give the reader any significant assistance in arriving at a satisfactory interpretation of the story. Like "River Two Blind Jacks," meaning is transmitted mainly on the level of allegory.

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[19] Dave Godfrey, "Small Presses: An Interview with Stan Bevington and Dave Godfrey," Canadian Forum, 47 (August, 1967), p. 107.

The story concerns seven woodcarvers who set out from the Queen Charlotte Islands to journey to the Bay of Chaleur on the East Coast of Canada in order to carve an Egsdrull, or tree of life. One by one they drop off along the way, through hardship, death, or plain disinterest in the enterprise. One woodcarver finally makes it to their destination, but he shortly thereafter dies, and the Egsdrull project is never even started.

Of more concern here, however, are the quotations from the New York Times juxtaposed through out the story about the "Canadian" uranium king, Joseph Hirshhorn, the American developer who experienced an incredible rise from rags to riches at the expense of Canada's natural resources. The event Godfrey concentrates upon is Hirshhorn's gift of his multi-million dollar art collection to the U.S. government - a collection purchased with the money that he had made by exploiting Canada's natural resources.

The effect of the contrast between Hirshhorn's success and the Canadian carvers' dismal failure is most striking. His story is the epitome of the American dream and manifest destiny combined: the myth that North America is the land of opportunity, that it may be exploited with impunity, and that it bountifully rewards honest labour. The supreme irony is that although this rise to inestimable wealth has been at the expense of Canada, America gets the full benefit of his exploitive success.

The other area of prime concern to Canadians is the current and potential undesirable effects of living next door to a militaristic superpower that has assumed, albeit somewhat unwillingly, the role of protector and defender of the free world. Recent Canadian writers have tended to ignore the advantages accruing from good relations with such a powerful ally, and have concentrated rather on some of the harmful effects of inordinate capitulation to the demands of the American military-industrial complex.

The stultification of compassion for the misfortunes of individuals as a result of their commitment to militarism and technology by American society is examined in Dave Godfrey's short story, "Two Smiths." The narrator's encounter in Toronto with a nineteen-year-old draft dodger named Jimmy Randall Smith forms the framework for the story about Rhett Smith, a young American whose acute social conscience ironically gets him into serious trouble. Jimmy has come to Canada to begin a new life after forsaking his American homeland because he saw himself beginning to enjoy his brother's gory stories about killing in Viet Nam. The kind of society in which Rhett Smith's story takes place - a society which would produce such inhumanity and insensitivity to the suffering of others - is thus by implication conveyed to the reader even before the narrative switches to the later Smith.

The story of Rhett Smith centres on the day the narrator went out with him to hunt a bird that had proved almost impossible to kill. The reason was that it would fly straight up whenever danger threatened because its left eye had been shot out (implying that partial blindness is necessary to survival in that society?). The bird, described as "a romantic out of place in the pragmatic West,"[20] is a symbol of Rhett, who had spent a good deal of his life fighting against injustice and poverty. He was moved to this commitment to social action by hearing the story of a girl's rape in New York City while dozens of potential rescuers looked on in apathy, unwilling to get involved.

This decision got him into all kinds of trouble. His car was shot up by local police in Mississippi because he was seeking some alleviation in the Negro slum conditions there. He was also beaten by these same custodians of law and order. In addition, his old alma mater high school refused to support him because of the necessity of holding to a middle path in order to retain public financial support.

And then Rhett decided to get smart. So he completely capitulated, admitting to the judge at the phoney trial that had been rigged against him that "he was being led astray by forces inimicable to the American way of life," (p. 47) and received only a suspended sentence as his reward for such an admission.

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[20] Dave Godfrey, "Two Smiths," Death Goes Better With Coca-Cola (Toronto, 1967), p. 47.

This story is thus a scathing indictment of the American way of life - of its non-involvement, of its apathy, of its refusal to come to grips with human suffering, and of the attitude towards those who do attempt to become so involved. The whole propensity for callous violence is also apparent - in the rape, in the policemen's treatment of Rhett, and in the glorification of the Viet Nam war. The alternatives to this unhappy state of affairs in America are represented by the two Smiths: you must either capitulate, or leave.

The bitterest attack against American militarism and its potential danger to Canada of all the works I examined for this study was Ian Adams' short novel, The Trudeau Papers. Set in the immediate future, the story consists of the recollections of Alan Jarvis, a former Canadian collaborator with the C.I.A. who is awaiting imminent execution by Canadian guerillas at war with the United States. The instigating cause of this abnormal state of hostility between the two countries is the destruction by American defensive missiles over Alberta and Saskatchewan of two fifty-megaton Soviet missiles that had been released by a sabotaging C.I.A. agent so that the U.S.A.'s defense systems's effectiveness could be "tested." At no time did the American government give Canada warning of the threatening disaster; as a result, about three million Canadians had died.

The effect of this caustic American disregard for the welfare of their neighbour and ally is compounded by the Canadian government's response to the disaster - "at first paralysis, followed by ineptitude."[21] The Prime Minister and members of his cabinet fly to Washington to secure an explanation; they are unsuccessful, and on the return trip the P.M. "disappears," never to be seen again. No doubt is left in anyone's mind that the Americans were responsible.

Anarchy in Canada inevitably ensues, so American branch plants in Canada ask the U.S. to send in troops to "protect" American investments. In the meantime, withdrawal of foreign capital, much of it American, causes the Canadian economy to collapse. So Adams is also attacking this other aspect of Canadian concern - the extent to which the United States controls the Canadian economy. He demonstrates how closely related these two phases of the American presence - the militaristic mentality, and the economic dominancy - are. American military units invade Canada, ostensibly to "secure the area,"(p. 46) but actually to guarantee the continued use and depletion of Canadian natural resources. Ironically, they avoid B.C., which was already effectively

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[21] Ian Adams, The Trudeau Papers (Toronto, 1971), p. 27.

U.S.-controlled, and Quebec, because they don't want to get involved in her racial and cultural problems.

Particularly devastating is Adams' portrayal of the caustic, arrogant American reaction to the whole tragedy, as expressed by the Chairman of the U.S. Chiefs of Staff Committee:

> The Canadian tragedy is regrettable, but it is the most valuable military experience in history. The facts observed and compiled have put the United States fifty years ahead of the Soviet Union in modern missile strategy and all-round nuclear know-how. (p. 27)

As Godfrey demonstrated in "Two Smiths," the preservation of America's status as the protector of Western democracy seems to have the paradoxical effect of making the country insensitive to human suffering.

Equally repellent in Adams' view is the crass cowardice of Canada's National magazine in refusing to take a stand on the issues aroused by the holocaust for fear of antagonizing the narrow corporate interests that control it.[22] The narrator, a former Viet Nam journalist, had taken a tour of the devasted areas of Saskatchewan and Alberta, sending a report on the stark horror of conditions for publication in the National. The reasons for the editor's refusal of this eye-witness information are explained by the frustrated narrator:

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[22] John W. Warnock castigates this blandness of the Canadian press, brought about by the degree of American influence as well as the dictates of their paramount profit motive, in "All the News It Pays to Print," in Ian Lumsden, ed., Close the 49th Parallel etc.: The Americanization of Canada (Toronto, 1970), pp. 117-34.

> The editor of National magazine had little interest in my reports on the bombed areas of Edmonton and Saskatoon. The publisher had announced that there would be no special coverage given to the nuclear explosion, the disappearance of the Prime Minister and the presence of U.S. military forces in the country. "It will only be more criticism from the cheap seats," was his judgement. He had used the same phrase to veto reportage his staff had attempted over the past few years on the U.S. wars waged in southeast Asia and the U.S. takeover of the Canadian economy. (p. 50)

A novel such as this can certainly destroy the sense of thoughtless security that can be created by the failure of such popular media to acquaint Canadians with the potentially unpleasant consequences of an uncritical faith in America's goodwill. Most readers will no doubt see Adams' book as exaggerating the potential dangers to Canada of American militarism and economic domination, but as a reviewer of this novel so appropriately expressed it, "the worst thing about nightmares is their own logic."[23] The novel does provide ample reinforcement for the Canadian determination to be different, and to create a separate identity that will justify that decision.

After his remark about the universal Canadian determination not to be absorbed by the United States which I recorded at the beginning of this chapter, Blair Fraser adds the following qualifying observation:

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[23] O. H. T. Rudzik, "Letters in Canada: Fiction," University of Toronto Quarterly, 41 (Summer, 1972), p. 312.

> Most of us do not know exactly why [we prefer not to be Americans]. This uncertainty, besides being irritating in itself, complicates our reactions to the gravitational pull of the United States. It is hard to agree on means of protection when there is no agreement on the nature of the threat, or even on the fact that it exists.[24]

This lack of certainty about our feelings concerning the United States - our ambivalence, indeed, towards that nation - is evident in the fictional works examined in this chapter. The fact that a response to the United States cannot be avoided by any thinking Canadian is an important element in itself of our national consciousness. There would also seem to be a great deal of truth to the accusation that the presence of this great nation to the South provides a national scapegoat that helps us to set aside momentarily the frustrations aroused by an uncertainty as to what the characteristics of our national identity really are.

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[24] Fraser, p. 302.

XIII. The Canadian Identity and African Nationalism: Godfrey, Knight and Hood

A modest but nonetheless noteworthy tributary flowing into the mainstream of recent Canadian fiction is composed of several novels set in Africa. These novels have invariably examined some of the conflicts almost inevitably present in a newly independent nation - conflicts emanating from the inordinate enticements of power inherent in a fledgling nationalism, or from disruptive but deeply ingrained tribal allegiances, or from the difficulty of capitalizing upon opportunities for economic growth without capitulating to the forces that would attempt to exact ideological or political remuneration in return for aiding in the development of that country's human and natural resources.

The tendency for some Canadian writers to be drawn to this sort of conflict pleads for explanation, speculative or otherwise. It is much more than a conspiracy to prove that Canadian fiction can go beyond the limits of solely Canadian experience. In my view the prime reason for Canadian fascination with African nationalism can be found in the fact that many of the pressures and conflicts present in a newly independent African country have their clearly identifiable counterparts in recent or current Canadian experience. The threat to a firm conception of national identity posed by conflicting tribal, racial, or regional loyalties; the continual onslaught on national self-confidence that emanates from forces within and without that have capitulated to the assumptions of colonial inferiority; the perpetual resistance required against economic, ideological and political domination by larger powers - all of these consequences of being caught between two worlds are familiar components of Canadian national life. Perhaps Canadian writers are attracted by the prospect of greater dispassion in the examining of these very Canadian concerns in a totally non-Canadian context. Dave Godfrey, whose novel The New Ancestors is examined below, demonstrated in a recent interview his awareness of this opportunity for greater objectivity:

> I think the best thing I do is get outside myself, or at least split off some segment of myself that's close to someone else, and expand it into their life and . . . write about them, write about other people. In The New Ancestors, that kind of big structure forced me to do that.[1]

The best-known Canadian explorer of African nationalism through fiction is surely Margaret Laurence. In her first novel, This Side Jordan (1960), as well as her volume of short stories entitled The Tomorrow-Tamer and Other Stories (1963), Mrs. Laurence shows how independence upsets the routine of both the colonizer and the colonized, and how deeply ingrained assumptions about the superiority of the white man and the childlike inadequacy of the African have to be abandoned by both sides as the process of "Africanization" proliferates. Nathaniel Amegbe, the sensitive central figure in This Side Jordan, is most conscious of the opposing forces within him - the difficulty as an educated man of espousing a sense of values that is anything other than European, and yet a recognition that he must move beyond the sense of identity that has been afforded him by his African background. Nathaniel feels guilty about forgetting, or avoiding, his past origins, but he also recognizes that Ghana will have to move ahead into the future, taking advantage of educational and economic opportunities, ~~if~~ it is to resist the onslaughts of neo-colonialism.

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[1] Graeme Gibson, Eleven Canadian Novelists (Toronto, 1973), pp. 161-2.

A good deal of Laurence's writing about Africa is optimistic - or at the worst, provisionally hopeful. Such is not the case with three Canadian novels about Africa published during the period under investigation in this study: Dave Godfrey's The New Ancestors, David Knight's Farquharson's Physique and What It Did to His Mind, and Hugh Hood's You Can't Get There From Here. While these authors' handling of the difficulties arising from African independence is, like Laurence's, compassionate, all three novels are very pessimistic indeed about the prospect for resolving these difficulties.[2]

The New Ancestors is an intricate but impressive work that focuses upon the disillusionment gripping the fictional African country of Lost Coast (a thinly disguised Ghana, where Godfrey spent some time as a CUSO volunteer) several years after it has been granted its independence. The collapse of ancient loyalties, the persistence of tribalism, and the intrusion of neo-colonialism have all contributed to the collapse of aspirations embodied in the once-popular slogans of "Free-dom" and "Work and Happiness."

First of all, Godfrey demonstrates how independence produces uncertainty about one's own identity. The ancient securities of family ancestry and tribal loyalty are urged into insignificance by new ancestors - national rather than tribal leaders, governed by presumably national rather than regional aspirations. When these new ancestors fail, identity recedes, necessitating re-definition by compromise and realignment of loyalties. First Samuels, an important official in Kruman's government, is the prime focus of Godfrey's analysis in this respect. He maintains a public image as the most visible supporter of Kruman's Freedom People's Party, but secretly joins forces with Core, a counter-revolutionary movement committed to demonstrations against the government, blackmail, sabotage, and even murder. It is as a member of this group that First Samuels, in the most suspenseful scene in the novel, murders Gamaliel Harding as he is being attacked by a mob of market women who have recognized that the achievement of peace and plenty that Gamaliel has promised may be forever delayed. It is ironic that Gamaliel loses his life because of his inflexibility in refusing to change ancestors; to First Samuels, Gamaliel has become "a mere bourgeois reactionary who had adapted the papery words of the revolution, had eaten its idealism raw, had lived off its silver of betrayal - without ever changing his inner being."[3] The revolutionary Marxist rhetoric in which he thinks of Gamaliel leaves no doubt as to who Samuel's new ancestors are now.

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[2] Laurence herself has recognized how inappropriate her earlier spirit of hope now is. See her "Ten Years' Sentences," Canadian Literature, No. 41 (Summer, 1969), p. 12.

The immense difficulty of reducing inter-tribal intolerance in the interests of national solidarity is another aspect of African nationalism portrayed in this novel. A proper awareness of tribal identity is a legitimate component in one's sense of selfhood, but when that awareness is assumed to be the basis not just for uniqueness but for superiority, the achievement of the degree of cooperation required to realize the goals of as

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[3] Dave Godfrey, The New Ancestors (Toronto, 1970), p. 280.

tribally diverse an entity as a nation becomes virtually impossible. Canadian writers cannot help but be acutely aware of the problems emanating from an inordinate preoccupation by any segment in this country with either its racial or regional identity, which, I would argue, makes their handling of similar situations elsewhere that much more astute and sympathetic. Margaret Laurence recently confirmed this as far as her own writing about Africa is concerned:

> One might think perhaps I got a strong sense of tribe in Africa. I don't think it came from there at all. I think it came from my own past, as the most important things always do. I do have a very strong sense of a kind of tribal society.[4]

In an article written several years earlier, she demonstrates even more fully her understanding of the dangers of tribalism, particularly the problems that ensue when it becomes exclusivist:

> . . . I feel we can't say _them_ of Africans. What one has come to see, in the last decade, is that tribalism is an inheritance of us all. Tribalism is not such a bad thing, if seen as the bond which an individual feels with his roots, his ancestors, his background. . . . Where tribalism becomes . . . frighteningly dangerous is where the tribe - whatever it is, the Hausa, the Ibo, the Scots Presbyterians, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the in-group - is seen as "the people," the human beings, and the others, the un-tribe, are seen as sub-human. This is not Africa's problem alone; it is everyone's.[5]

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[4] Interview in Gibson, _Eleven Canadian Novelists_, p. 205.

[5] "Ten Years' Sentences," p. 13.

During the euphoria ensuing from the granting of independence to Lost Coast, expectations had been high that such abuse of tribalism was a thing of the past. The main exponent of this hope was Mr. Pobee-Biney, a government minister who had devoted much of his energy to trying to reconcile two feuding tribes, the Akante and the Akras. He was convinced that tribalism was "A feudal remnant. A crumb beneath the new broom. The nation would sweep such feudal jealousies into the dust."(p. 174) His optimism gains a substantial following at first, but soon, underestimating the potency of human jealousy and hatred, he becomes the object of animosity from not only the feuding tribes he was attempting to reconcile, but also the Redeemer, Kruman, who construes Pobee-Biney's popularity to be a threat to his own. He is first stripped of his membership in the party, then denied access to party funds, and shortly thereafter, jailed.

In the Georgetown prison where Pobee-Biney is confined, further demonstrations of the persistence of tribalism become evident. No prisoner ever has a guard from his own tribe. Not surprisingly, this leads to all kinds of abuses, especially when the guards are bushmen who take out their inferiority complex on their victims.(p. 192)

Pobee-Biney is finally released, a wiser but greatly embittered man. In a scene portraying First Samuels supervising the burning of the huts of some rebellious fishermen on the Silla outskirts, Pobee-Biney laughs to scorn several demonstrating students who display a sign, "End Tribalism Now." For him, the very suggestion is nothing more than an exercise in futility.

In the same scene, First Samuels reveals that he too underestimates the durability of inter-tribal intolerance. In an attempt to arouse the spectators he castigates the demonstrators as follows:

> End Racism, they say. Fine, I say. Let them wipe out their obruni methods, their obruni slogans begged from their foreign obruni masters. Lost Coast _is_ our tribe, let us hear them admit that, this nation _is_ our tribe, _this_ nation - not the ones who buy them with confusion and disorder and shame.(p. 181)

It takes the minister of Roads and Energy, Mr. Eban, a hard-headed realist whose political survival has been due to his adeptness at compromise and accommodation, to reveal to First Samuels the folly of assuming tribal prejudices could be abandoned so gracefully:

> You still believe, do you, after all these years of . . . counter-evidence, Samuels, your old theory that the governing group can toss three leopards, twelve baboons, a flock of vultures and what? Some pigs? - into the correct . . . theoretical structure, and come out with a peaceful collection of, of what, Mr. Samuels? Cf something sane, similar, loving, non-greedy, hard-working? Cows? There are no cows in Africa, Samuels. Termites perhaps. A society of termites?(p. 255)

The third critical threat to a newly independent nation's self-determination is that posed by neo-colonialism, defined rather succinctly on one of First Samuel's propaganda tapes:

> The essence of neo-colonialism is that the state which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the trappings of sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from the outside. (p. 168)

Here is another problem which Canadian writers are likely to understand more fully than their British or American counterparts at least. In a country whose very constitution can be altered only by the action of the British parliament, and at the same time whose culture and economy is dominated by American interests, such a sensitivity to pseudo-sovereignty is not unexpected.

In The New Ancestors Godfrey examines this problem of neo-colonialist interference in some depth. Indeed, his excessive animosity in the portrayal of such outside influences is so consistently intense as to impair the credibility of his analysis. The only outsider in the novel with any redeeming virtues is Michael Burdener, the English biology professor, whose sympathy with the African cause has been confirmed by his marriage to Ama Harding, sister to Gamaliel, the Lost Coastian patriot eventually murdered by First Samuels. Burdener devotes a great deal of his pedagogical energy to exposing for the benefit of his students the modus operandi of imperialists and neo-colonialists. The following remark is representative of such disclosures:

> You must seek questions. You were taught to seek answers because with answers you could be beaten. Stress their inferiority old chap, or you'll get

> nowhere. And if you run across a bright one, fill him so full of the encyclopaedia he'll not have time to think. That's what the school bosses say to us. (p. 128)

All other foreigners are neo-colonialists to a greater or lesser extent; their prime and consistent distinguishing characteristic is a repulsive superiority complex. Geoffrey Firebanks is a good example. A representative of the British Council in Lost Coast, we are informed that he "considered his position in independent Africa as somewhat analogous to that of a first century Greek expatriate, spreading his ideas and wisdom not in Rome but in some distant province."(p. 7)

In "The London Notebook" section a cricket game at Bishop Adisa School acts as a recurrent motif that further develops this uncomplimentary depiction of neo-colonialism. The representatives of two countries wishing to influence Lost Coast, Ling Huo, the Chinese ambassador, and Clarence Hathaway, his British counterpart, have mistakenly shown up to watch the proceedings - "Caught, the pair of them, by WAWA and forced to break a mutually stainless rule: never the twain shall meet."(p. 16) They proceed to sit as far apart as possible on the spectators' stage, but the ironic similarity of their motives brings them in fact very close together.

Godfrey reserves his most venomous anti-neo-colonialist sentiments, however, for the Americans. Anyone even casually familiar with Godfrey's writings both fictional and otherwise knows that he makes no secret of his disenchantment with the American dream. Godfrey wastes very little time in revealing his attitude towards American do-gooders. Geoffrey Firebanks passes a couple of Peace Corps Volunteers, the male member of whom nasally refuses the offer of a lift to Silla. "One of those American PCV's," Firebanks thinks. "Down in the dirt getting the job done. And pulling others down in the dirt with them."(p. 13)

Shortly thereafter, Godfrey makes clear that this is more than the expression of jealousy on the part of one imperialistically-minded intruder towards another. Switching to the omniscient narrative mode, he reveals the arrogance of this young American, Ricky Goldman by name. While on the make in Silla for a black woman, Goldman thinks to himself:

> This government was 100 per cent botch. . . . Boy, if this was socialism in operation no wonder the old man [Goldman's father] ran from redness and became a psychiatrist. No brains anywhere. Name a ministry with a brain? . . . Boy, if they wouldn't let Ricky G., a Red-diaper baby if the Birchers ever labeled one, teach these miserable kinkheads English nor History, he'd show them American ingenuity. He'd get the message across. Even in Maths or French they'd learn it. . . . Who cared if Ricky the Tricky flunked French and Maths at ole NYC?(p. 35)

His misapprehension of his total lack of discretion is capitalized upon by First Samuels and Burdener, who surprise him in the midst of a coupling session with a local prostitute. Even then, his naive chauvinism refuses to desert him as he screams, "Stop it, you guys. I'm an American. Americans are the most powerful good people in the world."(p. 41)

A rather more important role in the novel is played by the American lieutenant, Richard Rusk. A powerful symbol of unthinking imperialistic interference in Lost Coastian affairs, Rusk remains throughout the novel a hollow caricature. The reader is in perpetual doubt as to whether the man is capable of thought; his forte is action - most of which is in response to orders from his anonymous superiors. (p. 386) Michael Burdener records the audacious quality of this tendency when he first meets Rusk at Gamaliel's Grog Shop. Deciding he would like to play some chess, Rusk marches over to borrow a board and a set of men from some Russian players nearby. Michael is not certain whether Rusk is simply unaware of the social conventions that should govern relationships with one's enemies, or merely choosing to ignore such niceties. Burdener cannot help but secretly admire ". . . such brashness. The Americans would ask God for a cigarette and the devil for a light."(p. 28)

Rusk drops out of sight until the very complex surrealistic section of the novel entitled "In the Fifth City." This segment of the novel has no clear relationship to the rest, for it is set in the actual region of sub-Saharan Mali rather than the fictional Lost Coast, and with the exception of Lieutenant Rusk, a whole new set of characters is introduced.

Godfrey first of all makes explicit the typicality of this American:

> . . . there is something truthfully if indefinably American about him: an assurance, a willingness to smile, a lust after quantification, a competitive strength, a simple purity, a repetition of certain key phrases and ideas in all situations, a limited understanding of the ignobly tragic, a solidness to the body, a taste for steak, a shallowness of comprehension of other modes of social interaction than his own. (pp. 316-7)

The author then proceeds to describe, in impressionistic prose that is nothing short of a nightmare to follow, several imaginative modes in which Rusk is murdered. He is shot by a Daga slave on the order of three Tuareg tribesmen and summarily buried in the sand, poisoned by a beautiful woman, killed, along with four others, by an exploding pineapple in a bar, and destroyed by a booby-trapped basketball.

The simplest response one could make to this section is to propose that it is redundant and should be exorcised. It advances the central action of the novel not one jot, and in style it departs almost disruptively from the Lost Coast material. A more useful response, however, is to see this section as the culmination of this theme that is of such central concern in Godfrey's art - the intolerable interference of one country in the affairs of another. At this stage in the novel we have not yet been informed of the damage Rusk has initiated in Lost Coast; we only know that here in Mali he is attempting to "stir up trouble in the army and prepare for a rightist coup by the Bamako colonels."(p. 329) Burdener does reveal in the final section of the novel that Rusk has been responsible for the deaths of fifteen members of Core, the militant counter-revolutionary organization with which First Samuels was associated. Godfrey's assumption about the inherent insensitivity tc violence historically evident in the American psyche is altogether evident:

> And how did he [Rusk] think? Was it simple for him. The actual death of those fifteen young men. It must have been. An algebraic nothing. Fifteen Lost Coastians. Nothing more than fifteen Mohawks. Fifteen Pasquemoddys. Fifteen Crows. Fifteen Floridas. That doesn't enter it; that's foreordained. The blood and slaughter causes of his raciality.(p. 387)

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Burdener concludes that there is no possible justification for the man being allowed to stay alive.

The style of the "In the Fifth City" section, then, underscores the profound pointlessness and frequent lack of direction of imperialistic interference in the affairs of Africa. The inordinate risks of such an undertaking are emphasized; it is not clear whether Rusk is actually killed, but at the very least the multiplicity of potential threats to his life is conveyed. And for what cause? Not only is the wealth of this part of Africa highly suspect, but its entire history is one of constant tribal warfare, so what does another military coup matter?[6] The foreigners to a man are ill at ease, dissatisfied, and out of place. That the whole undertaking is an exercise in madness this section by both its style and its content makes abundantly clear.

One of the most remarkable accomplishments of The New Ancestors lies in Godfrey's ability to examine these issues of identity disorientation, tribalism and neo-colonialism from several points of view, both African and non-African. The variety of narrative modes and absence of a chronological sequence of events also contribute to the atmosphere of fragmentation and instability that the novel is attempting to portray.

A rather more conventional and yet similarly absorbing treatment of the difficulties attendant on the acquisition of national independence is to be found in David Knight's novel with the unwieldy title of Farquharson's Physique and What It Did to His Mind. Godfrey's novel provides evidence of its Canadian origin only in terms of its themes; Knight supplements this relationship by making his central character a Canadian university professor, Henry John Farquharson, who with his wife and small son has come to the University of Ibadan in Nigeria to teach English literature for one year. With the exception of the Introduction, ~~to~~

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[6] See Donald Cameron, "The Three People Inside Dave Godfrey," Saturday Night, 86 (Sept., 1971), 22.

which the author adds the anomalous designation "Prologue or Epilogue," the narrative line is carefully chronological; indeed, the chapter titles consist exclusively of dates, giving the novel very much of a documentary quality. The period covered, September 14, 1965, to July 29, 1966, is approximately the same as that of Godfrey's novel - February, 1965, to February, 1966. The political events and the political figures involved are factual in Knight's novel, however, adding an additional element of authenticity to the narrative.

Farquharson's wife Joan joins a long line of wives in the Canadian fictional tradition who are unwillingly constrained to participate in their husbands' expedition into the unknown. Joan seems resolved to dislike Africa right from the start - its dirt, its cheating, its absence of conveniences, its domestic servants, its perpetual atmosphere of insecurity. Farquharson comes to see her as "a prying, miserable woman who should have stayed in Canada."[7] Refusing to disbelieve in his ability to not only adapt to Africa but also to contribute something to its development, he establishes a vigorous sexual liaison with Gail Johnston, a former student of his from Toronto now teaching drama at the University of Ibadan, in order to compensate for the progressively deteriorating relationship with his wife. This relationship with Gail acts as a useful index of the degree of his adaptation to African cultural mores, for it symbolizes the elimination of inhibition that is an important component of _his_ concept of acculturation.

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[7] David Knight, _Farquharson's Physique and What It Did to His Mind_ (New York, 1971), p. 432.

One striking characteristic shared by all three of the novels under discussion here is their unusual preoccupation with violence. Farquharson's increasing recognition of the common heritage of savagery he shares with the Africans is the key discovery he makes during his voyage from innocence to experience. As in Godfrey's novel, tribal intolerance provides the motive for the expression of violence. Political parties capitalize upon tribal affinities; as History professor Edward Eayrs tells Farquharson, "There didn't use to be this kind of hatred and organization. God damn it, the tribal organizations were cultural."(p. 140) Once in power, a party freely resorts to intimidation, election-fixing, and even murder to perpetuate its existence.

Farquharson persists in attempting to preserve a stance of patient neutrality. He is rudely awakened to the fact that fence-sitting is impossible in Africa when, returning from observing a student anti-government demonstration, he kills two partisan thugs who are ransacking his house, and later that night discards their bodies into a ditch.

At first, Farquharson does not recognize that in trying to become more immune to the violent consequences of tribalism, he is becoming less human. He tries to convince himself that "Sympathy . . . was a useless, interfering, and degrading privileged tourist's quality."(p. 284) He even goes so far as to admit that he had enjoyed committing murder. Then just a couple of weeks before the Farquharsons are to leave Nigeria, Henry is suddenly awakened to the inhumanity of tribal hatred when several Ibos are pointlessly slaughtered during a trip he and his son Jamie take to Akure. He finally admits that he can hardly wait to return to Canada now. His relationship with Gail, which up to that point had symbolized his rejection of the former inhibitions of his Canadian lifestyle, now begins to decline into emptiness:

> Night after night he was there, slow, huge, giving her everything he happened to be in that half-hour, the casual, whole self with never a repeat. And yet he wasn't happy: he was a wretchedly angry person waiting to go back to Canada.(p. 455)

In the meantime Joan, having discovered that Henry was a murderer and deciding that he was no longer a fit father for her son, secretly flees to Lagos with Jamie. Farquharson goes in pursuit courtesy of Oscar Nwonkwo, the Nigerian patriotic poet who lived next door. Oscar tries to convince him that the violence he had witnessed was about to end:

> . . . that what he had seen was one of the death spasms of the First Republic, inevitable perhaps, but essentially meaningless, and something which had already ceased to happen in the North. "We have turned

> the corner," he said. "We have put our Time of Trouble behind us. Now it is in truth 'One Nigeria.'"(pp. 455)

Oscar does not realize it, but the current hostilities were just the beginning of what was to lead eventually to that bloody attempt at tribal genocide known as the Biafran War.

Airport authorities refuse to allow Joan and Jamie to leave Lagos without Henry. On the way to an anticipated reunion with his son, Farquharson is asked by Oscar, "Do you want to leave our country so very much?" He replies:

> I can't think of that. I want Jamie safe in my hands, and to know what to do with his mother. What's Nigeria? I want to get out before anything else happens here. I'm tired of bodies. The next body I want is my own, thankyou very much.(p. 470)

That wish is tragically granted. Just as he is about to be reunited with his family, soldiers appear bent on commandeering the airport. When Farquharson intervenes as an Ibo clerk is being bayoneted, he is wounded in the stomach, and then, to avoid the embarrassment of an investigation, a soldier blows Farquharson's brains out.

The compelling portrayal of the potentially destructive consequences of bigoted tribalism is the chief success of this novel. My thesis is that the Canadian writer is particularly sensitive to such issues because of similar threats in his own country.

The least successful of these three novels about Africa is Hugh Hood's _You Can't Get There From Here_. Although it is hampered by a marked preference for narration in lieu of dramatization, and by characters who are far too representative to engage our sympathies, the novel still manages to examine rather closely the issues of tribalism and neo-colonialism in the newly independent fictional African state of Leofrica. It opens in the office of the new prime minister designate, Mr. Anthony Jedeb, as he makes preparations for the first cabinet meeting. He clearly is the most suitable Leofrican for this office; not only does he possess the highest educational qualifications of anyone in the country, but his background of having been born in the Ugeti highlands and yet having lived most of his life among the Pineal lowlanders qualifies him as the one most likely to succeed in bringing about a resolution of the smoldering atmosphere of mutual hostility that governs relationships between the two groups. Like a pedantic school-teacher, the narrator reveals that there is no rational basis for the Ugeti hatred of the Pineals, for the latter have a long history of being agreeable and unwarlike:

> The foreign anthropologists who have made studies of the Leofrican peoples have always been puzzled by the fear felt by the Ugeti of their placid neighbours. It is one of the most striking instances in cultural anthropology of a mass delusion without any historical base. Yet this delusive, almost hallucinatory terror felt by one tribe for the other is a real social fact in Leofrica, and has to be dealt with as such, not as a childish fancy.[8]

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[8] Hugh Hood, You Can't Get There From Here (Ottawa, 1972), p. 20.

In his inaugural address, Jedeb faces squarely this social fact, but he also believes that sweetness and light will prevail in helping them to surmount it:

> In our country a man is first of all a herdsman of the highlands or a planter of the lowlands. That is the first fact we have to recognize in the founding of our united state. There are two peoples here.
>
> But I tell you, fellow Leofricans, from this day onward these two peoples can, must and will grow toward union and mature statehood. (p. 22)

He goes on to promise full representation of all tribal, local, economic and ideological interests in his government. In order to do this he appoints four Ugetis, four Pineals, and three non-indigenous Leofricans to his cabinet. The inadequacy of Jedeb's idealism is shortly thereafter revealed, for bickering along tribal lines breaks out almost immediately at the first cabinet meeting, and the appointees demonstrate an almost universal unwillingness to rise above a preoccupation with their own selfish interests of salary or personal aggrandizement.

Like Dave Godfrey, though, Hood reserves his most caustic satirical talents for his depiction of those imperialistic forces that seek to manipulate and exploit Leofrica in keeping with their particular ideological goals. Ralph MacSweyn is the head of Interfoods, an American company devoted to the shameless exploitation of Leofrica's sole exportable commodity - nut oil. Fatuous and myopic, he is completely incapable of assessing matters from any value system other than his own. The narrator ironically describes his simplistic approach to life as follows:

> He was one of a new kind of man who can envisage real social institutions deriving from American models, extended on a global scale. He was among the first true world-citizens, without affection for any particular place or set of local customs. He thought mostly about technical matters, usually related to communications, in a new kind of language as close to pictures as possible. His logic and his function alike dictated his characteristic contempt for complex syntax and peculiarity of expression. (p. 38)

The ostensible head of the Soviet presence in Leofrica, the uxorious Mr. Leontiev, is presented somewhat more sympathetically than either MacSweyn or the American ambassador, Fenton Ruggles. Genuinely committed to aiding in Leofrica's technical development, Leontiev hopes to attract the country into the Russian sphere of influence by diplomacy rather than intrigue.

The insidious nature of power politics is soon revealed, however, for it turns out that the real motive of both Soviet and American foreign policy is to drive Leofrica into the unwilling arms of the opposite major power. This plan is revealed to Leontiev by the beautiful spy Amelie de Caulaincourt, who by means of her abundant charms has been successful in worming her way not only into the good graces of most of the power-mongers in the country, but into a portfolio of the Leofrican cabinet itself. It is Amelie, Leontiev discovers, who has engineered the destruction of the expedition of Soviet scientists and technicians which had journeyed to the Ugetiland interior for the purpose of building a road. This inhuman deed was deemed to be a justifiable means of providing the Soviets with a basis for withdrawing from Leofrica.

The Americans naturally have their secret agent in Leofrica also; he is Clive Maharaj, Prime Minister Jedeb's naive confidential secretary, whose CIA superiors have equipped him with a sophisticated electronic device for sending six five-minute messages on Leofrican activities to a mysteriously omnipresent receiving station. That station turns out to be a U.S. submarine that has been completely immobilized for ten weeks in order to receive Clive's innocuous messages. In what is obviously meant to be an example of typical Yankee overkill, the submarine captain triggers a self-destruct device in Clive's set right after the last message, which blows to pieces not only Clive but also his Pineal landlord, nine other lodgers in the tenement house, and two whole families living adjacent to the ill-fated establishment. This does not occur before Clive has single-handedly sabotaged the Interfoods complex and blown it sky-high to provide the Americans with a good alibi for withdrawing from the country.

Not to be outdone, the Albanian trade commissioner Zogliu gets one up on both his capitalist and revisionist counterparts by engineering the secession of Ugetiland from Leofrica. He accomplishes this with the aid of Lance-Major Abdelazar, a Ugeti official attached to the Defence ministry, who in the process murders the Cultural Affairs minister for refusing to go along with the plot.

It hardly needs to be added that against these odds, Leofrica of course does not survive. Prime Minister Jedeb manages to escape to the Ugeti River in the ensuing revolution, but when partisans on both sides start shooting at him he does what any self-respecting defeated mediator would do and dives to permanent refuge at the bottom of the river.

Mr. Rowland Smith's assessment of this novel very astutely summarizes its limitations:

> There is little reason . . . to read the novel as a Canadian parable; and even less illumination if one does. No character emerges from the tableau with life or vigour. The reader's sympathies cannot be formulated, let alone engaged. For all Hood's wealth of journalistic detail, the country and its people remain two-dimensional, described at length, but without any imaginative life of their own. . . . The reader is in no danger of having his prejudices challenged on the viability of emerging states, the fatuity of a two-nation concept, the cynicism of the superpowers, or the wickedness of the world.[9]

The same criticism cannot be levelled against the novels of Godfrey and Knight, but I do wonder if cynicism and anger do not occasionally pervert the artist's intention in these novels. The credibility of the American neo-colonialists in both the latter novels, for example, is certainly reduced because of this tone of outrage.

Margaret Laurence, in a recent conversation with Robert

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[9] "Telegrams and Anger," Canadian Literature, No. 58 (Autumn, 1973), pp. 101-2.

Kroetsch, made a comment about her African writing that has an important bearing here. She recognized that as a Canadian in Africa she remained the perpetual detached outsider:

> You were in a sense, even though you were involved with the experience, cared about it, and all the rest of it . . . in some way you were a tourist. You could quit. You could get out. But with your own experience, your own background, your own roots, you have to come to terms.[10]

As I see it, coming to terms involves not only the sensitive delineation of problems, which these writers certainly do; it also involves the working out of some sort of synthesis (solution is too facile a word). Anger is understandable but ultimately unproductive. As Canadian writers, in spite of their recognition of the similarity of these African situations to the Canadian experience, these novelists can avoid the demands of resolution - can get out, as Laurence puts it. That is exactly what they do, and this, if anything, is their shortcoming.

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[10] Robert Kroetsch, ed., Creation (Toronto, 1970), p. 61.

Conclusion

It would be presumptuous indeed to assume that this study has laid to rest all the arguments against the existence of an identifiable and definable concept called the Canadian identity. The issue is too complicated to hope for anything approaching a consensus as to whether the topic should even be discussed, much less what the Canadian identity is.

Three conclusions emerge from this survey of recent Canadian fiction, however, which in my judgement help to clear away a good deal of the confusion that so frequently accompanies discussions about the Canadian identity. The first of these is the recognition that the attempt to ascertain the qualities of one's national identity is most frequently an after-the-fact rationalization of a previous determination to be a part of a particular national milieu. This rationalization tends to emphasize differences between one's own country and all other countries and underrate similarities, while simultaneously under-estimating differences among one's compatriots in the interest of highlighting similarities, although I have shown that since Canadians tend to be more tolerant of diversity, there is a consequent diminution of this customary tendency to overlook differences within one's own nation. To express this first conclusion more succinctly, then, statements about national identity are by definition partly contrived or mythical. It follows that the determination of whether the elements of our national identity are true is of much less moment than whether they are significant components of our national self-image in the eyes of a large number of this nation's inhabitants.

Secondly, it is of utmost importance to recognize that a sense of national identity is only one of several constituents in a person's sense of self - of his personal identity, in other words. My sense of being a Canadian is an important contributor to my awareness of time and place and cultural orientation, but other relationships to family, friends, social institutions and so on also contribute to my concept of self. Imaginative explorations through literature of human character and personality recreate the conditions of culture and milieu that reflect elements of national identity, but such literary works fashion other issues and events that have nothing whatsoever to do with national identity, and yet contribute substantially to the delineation of personal identity in the characters involved.

Thirdly, this study has tried to demonstrate that the Canadian identity is multi-dimensional - that tolerance of diversity is its primary quality. In my view the failure to stress that diversity is the chief characteristic of our national identity, not its chief obstacle, has produced a good deal of the criticism and misunderstanding that tends to be directed at efforts such as the present study to analyze the qualities of our national identity. This investigation of recent Canadian fiction has revealed several strands of national experience that are not necessarily unique to this country, but which are demonstrably central in the outlook of many Canadians, and which together help to determine for most of us what it means to be a Canadian. For example, few Canadians can be unaware that the coexistence of French-speaking and English-speaking compatriots under the aegis of a single federal authority requires constant compromise and negotiation for this nation to persist. One could perhaps view such a threat to national unity as an obstacle to our sense of national identity; I have tried to show that fictional prognostications about its potential effect on Canada demonstrate that the issue constitutes an essential quality of our national identity.

Another important element in our national experience that several recent novelists examine is the plight of our native peoples - Eskimos and Indians. Because of the vastness of Canada's terrain these peoples have heretofore tended to reside in remote areas in the North, or on reserves, but renewed fictional interest in the problems of native peoples has revealed that racial prejudice is by no means an unknown Canadian quality. We have also been reminded that the question of day-to-day survival, an issue that few Canadians encounter anymore, is still a vital concern for most of our native population.

A third component in the Canadian identity is the presence in this country of a vast number of recent immigrants. The clash of cultural values, the disappointment of expectations, and yet the undeniable note of hope sounded in the several immigrant novels discussed in Chapter VII, are all qualities of the Canadian experience that have been shared by many Canadians, or witnessed by many others already a part of the Canadian scene.

For most of its history Canada's population has been made up of rural or small-town dwellers. The values of the Puritan ethic - hard work, endurance of suffering and deprivation, a strict moral code - have become firmly engrained in the outlook of many Canadians. The comparatively recent trend towards urbanization in this country, coupled with a not entirely unrelated diminution of the importance of some of these rural or small-town values, has produced a notable tendency for recent novelists to look back, sometimes with nostalgia, at other times with resentment, at the experiecnes of that by-gone era - experiences within the living memory of a significant portion of the Canadian population. Dissatisfaction with the restrictions and rigours of that life-style led many Canadians to abandon their rural and small-town environments, some for the city, others for a completely different country, only to discover that loneliness and disorientation and failure were products not so much of geography as of social intractability, and thus potential human experiences regardless of locale. Few Canadians have been able to avoid the tendency to censure Canada for qualities of life that are later discovered to be universally shared. Often it has taken physical removal from the country before this false assignment of blame has been recognized.

I have also demonstrated that another element in the Canadian identity for many of our writers is our awareness of the marked effect on our attitudes and values of our historical and cultural ties with Great Britain and the United States. Here is where the tendency to highlight differences and underrate similarities when discussing national identity becomes most noticeable, particularly in connection with Canada's relation to the United States. One of the most important elements in many Canadians' conception of themselves is that they consider themselves neither British nor American, and yet share many of the qualities and attitudes of both nations. Recent novelists reveal that the Canadian determination to be different from both Americans and Englishmen has provided a significant catalyst to the awareness of shared experience that a sense of national identity depends upon.

The chapter on Africa is an unexpected contributor to a discussion of the Canadian identity, but I found a consistent sympathy on the part of several Canadian novelists portraying emerging African nationalism with many of the issues facing the leaders of such nations - the problems of tribal rivalry and the intrusion of foreign interests being the main ones - a sympathy that was to be explained partly because of analagous situations in Canada. Insofar as national identity is to be defined in terms of a shared awareness of dilemma, that component of personal identity was illuminated.

These affirmations about the Canadian identity affect a number of issues in the current discussion of the Canadian identity among cultural and literary analysts. I wish to conclude this study by going out on a limb, as it were, to indicate my response to these issues. First of all, I recognize that this attempt to define the Canadian identity in terms of responses to shared experiences represents a departure from the customary tendency to seek the Canadian identity in recurrent literary themes. The latter tendency is a valuable device for explicating the literary merit of works of literature, but in my opinion since thematic patterns are rarely restricted by national boundaries, they fail to contribute to that sense of exclusiveness on which national identity depends. In addition, the identification of a community of mutual concerns as the basis for national identity more readily admits a diversity of responses than a discussion of central themes does, particularly important in Canada's case because of my contention that the Canadian identity's most fundamental quality is its tolerance of diversity.

Secondly, I must confess to a certain amount of impatience with the view that concern about the Canadian identity is the tiresome consequence of a national insecurity that only confirms our immaturity. The chief fault with this view is its erroneous assumption that national identity is some kind of static quality that once identified need never again be questioned. I have tried to show that while certain components of the Canadian identity remain relatively stable, other aspects are in a constant state of flux. The question of national identity justifies continual investigation because of this dynamic factor. In addition, a certain amount of insecurity will be part of the nature of things in Canada for the foreseeable future, in my opinion, as long as the U.S.A. retains its position of dominance in world affairs. Whenever identity is threatened, it is almost invariably strengthened, or perhaps more accurately, the need to assert its characteristics becomes more necessary, which helps to explain why the question seems to concern Canadians so much more than Americans, for example. Furthermore, because of the particular perplexities surrounding the question of the Canadian identity, I feel that the investigation demands the talents of our finest literary and cultural analysts. Only a nation that has attained a reasonable level of self-confident maturity can permit this kind of unapologetic, rigorous analysis.

Finally, I can affirm without reservation that when the Canadian identity is seen in these broader terms of national values and experiences, the question becomes a matter of central importance, not merely peripheral interest, when it comes to surveying a body of our literature as this study has attempted to do. Such a survey must be seen for its limitations, however, the chief of which is its preoccupation with the "what" of our national literature to the almost complete omission of the "how." I have been awakened more than ever to the remarkable richness and diversity and complexity of Canadian literature, however, and am convinced that this device of investigating to what extent this very recent and largely unexplored body of fiction revealed elements of the Canadian identity has provided a useful introduction to a more expanded analysis of structure, technique, theme, and so forth, that explication of serious literature ultimately requires.

I have also become more than ever convinced that a modest amount of pride in this country's positive qualities need not detract from a reasonable and dispassionate assessment of our literary achievements. The extremes of inordinate denigration or adulation of our literature must always be avoided, but it is very clear to me that our writers are producing creative literature worthy of the most perceptive and painstaking analysis. The question of relative greatness of current literature need not even be discussed, for that is a matter solely for posterity to determine. There are much more important critical tasks to be performed. It is my hope that this study has revealed the potential usefulness of such further investigations.

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Abbreviations

AM	*Atlantic Monthly*
CF	*Canadian Forum*
CL	*Canadian Literature*
DR	*Dalhousie Review*
GM	*The Globe Magazine*
JCF	*Journal of Canadian Fiction*
JCL	*Journal of Commonwealth Literature*
LHY	*Literary Half-Yearly*
QQ	*Queen's Quarterly*
Q&Q	*Quill and Quire*
SN	*Saturday Night*
TCL	*Twentieth Century Literature*
TR	*Tamarack Review*

UTQ	*University of Toronto Quarterly*
WAL	*Western American Literature*

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